FATHER GREGORY MENGARINI
AN ITALIAN JESUIT MISSIONARY IN THE TRANSMONTANE WEST
HIS LIFE AND MEMOIRS

by

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PREFACE

PREFACE

Indefatigable scholarly research best describes the process by which the "Memorie" of Gregory Mengarini, S.J., was discovered and eventually made available.[1] The translation of this singularly important document in the history of the Transmontane West would never have occurred had it not been for the painstaking investigation of sources by Professor Doyce B. Nunis, Jr., and William L. Davis, S.J. In 1960 the existence of this manuscript was unknown to western history scholars. But questions raised by Professor Nunis, as he edited the memoirs of Josiah Belden, necessarily included queries about the Jesuit missionaries, including Mengarini, with whom Belden's group traveled for many weeks in the first planned 1841 emigrant party to strike overland for California. The questions raised spurred inquiry, for they needed answers.

Naturally, the investigation was enthusiastically aided by Father Davis, an expert on the history of the Society of Jesus in the Northwest, and a specialist particularly on the life of Pierre Jean De Smet, S.J. Eventually, the combined research bore fruit. On January 22, 1961, Father Davis wrote: "I have not yet told you of the great discovery I have made. . . . Among the [Gilbert J.] Garraghan transcripts at Loyola U. (Chicago) I found a long narrative account of St. Mary's mission by Padre Mengarini, S.J."[2]

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[1] Gregory Mengarini, "Memorie delle Missioni delle Teste Piatte contenenti brevi nozioni cosi antiche che moderne di tutto cio che riguarda questa nazione in particulare," Montes Saxosi, Vol. 1, Fol. VIII, p. 7 ff, General Archives of the Society of Jesus, Rome, Italy. (Hereinafter cited as Mt. Sax., GASJ.)

Father Davis sent a copy of this typescript to Professor Nunis who had provided the initial historical statements on Mengarini in his introduction to the edited memoirs of Josiah Belden.[3] As a result of the generosity of both Father Davis and Professor Nunis, the "Memorie" was made available to me as the basis for my doctoral dissertation. I snapped the lure; this finished endeavor, I hope, warrants the confidence and enthusiastic support placed in me by Father Davis and Professor Nunis.

Through the additional assistance of these two leading Western historians, it was also possible to continue research in the Jesuit Provincial Archives at Gonzaga University. There a microfilm copy was discovered of the original manuscript which is housed in Rome. After a careful comparison of the original handwritten text and the typescript, numerous errors in the latter were corrected.[4] The document was then translated and edited.

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[2] William L. Davis, S.J., to Doyce B. Nunis, Jr., Evanston, Illinois, January 22, 1961, personal correspondence file, courtesy of Doyce B. Nunis, Jr.

[3] Doyce B. Nunis (ed.), Josiah Belden, 1841 California Overland Pioneer: His Memoir and Early Letters (Georgetown, California, 1962), p. 25.

It is true that there are obvious parallels between the "Memorie" and Mengarini's later reminiscences such as "The Rocky Mountains," originally published in *The Woodstock Letters*, and subsequently edited by Albert J. Partoll as "Mengarini's Narrative of the Rockies."[5] It has also been noted that before his death, the aging Jesuit dictated his memoirs, which were then published in a limited edition for private circulation.[6] In the *Woodstock* edition of the memoirs, however, Mengarini introduces the narrative with the observation: "Now when I am old and life's shortening steps hurry me toward the tomb, I am asked to stop awhile and tell the story of the birth, infancy, and premature death of the earliest of the Rocky Mountain missions."[7]

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[4] Consult Appendix C, "An Analysis of the Variants in the Gibbs Account of Flathead Cosmology."

[5] Gregory Mengarini, "The Rocky Mountains, The Memoirs of Father Gregory Mengarini," *The Woodstock Letters*, XVII (1888), 293-309; XVIII (1889), 25-43, 142-53; edited by Albert J. Partoll, "Mengarini's Narrative of the Rockies," *Frontier and Midland*, XVIII (Spring, 1938), 193-202; (Summer, 1938), 258-266. Reprinted in *Sources of Northwest History*, ed. by Paul C. Phillips (Missoula, Montana, n.d.), Number 25; reprinted in *Frontier Omnibus*, ed. by John W. Hakola (Missoula, Montana, 1962), pp. 139-60.

[6] "In 1884 while serving on the faculty of Santa Clara College, Father Mengarini acceded to the requests of several Jesuit friends and dictated this account. A few copies were printed after his death on September 23, 1886." Nunis, *Belden*, p. 25.

In contrast, the original reminiscences were written while the thirty-seven-year-old missionary was serving at St. Mary's mission. Thus the impressions are firsthand, precise and vivid. The accuracy of the date and hence the validity of the data is assured by the fact that in the final paragraphs of the account Mengarini outlined his future plans for the expansion of the settlement, describing in detail the trees, meadows and crude brick houses. He added that the mission's progress and expansion was outlined on an attached map which long since has been lost.

The "Memorie" acquire even greater significance when compared to similar journals and diaries of the period. Unlike the brilliantly illustrated Wilderness Kingdom, the memoirs of Mengarini's Jesuit companion, Nicolas Point,[8] the following account is concerned with a variety of ethnographic elements and anthropological factors, as well as with spiritual victories and disappointments. Mengarini's narrative thus assumes an ethnohistorical dimension.

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[7] Mengarini, "The Rocky Mountains," The Woodstock Letters, XVIII (1888), 298.

[8] Nicolas Point, Wilderness Kingdom, Indian Life in the Rocky Mountains, trans. and ed. by Joseph P. Donnelly, S.J. (New York, 1967).

Furthermore, since Father Mengarini spent nearly an entire decade with the Flatheads, his text offers a long range view of the diminuition of cultic practices, the modification of familial relationships, and the marked changes in governmental and economic patterns. One might venture that on this basis Mengarini was justified in expressing an hypothesis regarding the acculturative influences of the advancing whites upon the native Indian. One might add further that where the accounts penned by De Smet provide the grand panorama, Mengarini's provides the case study.

There is an added significance in this work. Few men know of Gregory Mengarini. Fewer still would include his name on the list of westward trailblazers. Yet this patrician young Roman, aquiline in profile and firm of jaw, was among the vanguard of westering pioneers. His missionary group was accompanied for many weeks by the first wagon train to California led by John Bidwell. After the two companies separated at Soda Springs on the Bear River, it was Gregory Mengarini who became the administrative head of the first Jesuit mission in the Rockies. He directed the planting of the first seeds, and participated in the erection of the first log church, built in a protected valley, twenty-eight miles from the mouth of the Bitterroot River. His long, bitterly cold nights were spent compiling the first Salish or Flathead grammar, as well as transcribing the beginnings of a Salishan dictionary.[9]

With the closing of St. Mary's mission in 1850, Mengarini was to participate in launching yet another "first." He soon joined Fathers Nobili and Accolti to assist in the organization of the first permanent college in California at Santa Clara. During more than half a century this Jesuit labored in the United States never far removed from the thin advance line of the frontier settlement. Part of his task was to nourish the culture and the traditions that struggled to survive along the wilderness trail. His commitment to his Faith and his devoted service to white and Indian alike were to draw him across the continent from Baltimore, to Westport, and finally to the Pacific coast of California.

In translating and editing this western pioneer's narrative, certain liberties were necessarily taken. Idiomatic expressions were modernized. While the author's style was respected in an attempt to retain the "flavor" of the account, transposition of phrase and a change in sentence structure were occasionally required for the sake of clarity. In the interests of organization, paragraphing and the division of the account into chapters was allowed.

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[9] According to Carlos Sommervogel, ed., Bibliotheque de la Compagnie de Jesus (11 vols.; Brussels and Paris, 1890-1919), V, 946, Mengarini's publications include the following: A Salishan or Flathead Grammar (New York, 1861); "Vocabulary of the Skoyalpi, Schitsni and Selish Proper," Contributions to American Ethnology, ed. by John Wesley Powell (Washington, 1877), I, 248-65, 267-85; "Indians of Oregon," Journal of Anthropological Research of New York (New York, 1871-1872), I, 81-88; "Letter to P. De Smet, Saint Mary's, June 28, 1842," in Jean Pierre De Smet, Voyages aux Montagnes Rocheuses (New ed., Brussels, 1873), pp. 224-26; "Vocabulary of the Santa Clara Indians," Contributions to American Ethnology, ed. by John Wesley Powell (Washington, 1877), III, 538-49; "The Rocky Mountains, The Memoirs of Father Gregory Mengarini," The Woodstock Letters, XVII (1888), 293-309; XVIII (1889), 25-43, 142-53.

For the opportunity to translate and edit the "Memorie," I am indebted to Professor Doyce B. Nunis, Jr. of the University of Southern California and to Father William L. Davis, S.J., of Gonzaga University. For access to the entire catalogue of Father Mengarini's correspondence in the Jesuit Archives in Rome, I am indebted to Father Joseph Fejer, S.J. of the Archivum Romanum Societatis Jesu. For many other related items, I thank Father Wilfred A. Schoenberg, S.J., Director of the Jesuit Provincial Archives, Crosby Library, Gonzaga University. For several letters written by Mengarini while serving as an administrator of Santa Clara College, I am grateful to the Henry E. Huntington Memorial Library, San Marino, California; the Santa Barbara Mission Archive Library; and the informed assistance of Mr. Gerald McKevitt of Loyola University, Los Angeles.

For the greater part of the biographical data I wish to acknowledge my debt to the Jesuit Provincial Archives, Spokane, Washington; the California State Library; the Jesuit Archives of the California Province, Palo Alto; and the Archivum Romanum Societatis Jesu in Rome; as well as the Archives of the University of Santa Clara.

A number of individuals have also offered considerable assistance in my research. It is my pleasure to thank Professor Nunis, my advisor; Father William L. Davis, S.J., my Maecenas in the study of the Jesuit missions of the Northwest; and Father Joseph Fejer, my overseas correspondent in Rome. Thanks as well are extended to Miss Mary Isabel Fry of the Henry E. Huntington Memorial Library; Mrs. Charlotte Tufts, formerly the librarian of the Southwest Museum; William Spearman, S.J., of the University of Santa Clara; Mrs. Elizabeth Crahan of the Los Angeles County Medical Association Library; and Miss Josephine L. Harper of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.

Not to be forgotten is Harold D. Roberson, Superintendent of the Flathead Indian Agency, Jocko Indian Reservation, who introduced me to the Bitterroot Valley and arranged for my attendance at a Flathead tribal council meeting. And to Samuel K. Lothrop, a sigh of relief and appreciative thanks for his unfaltering aereonautic skills which transported us to the various mission sites across land as desolate and ranges as rugged as Mengarini described.

Also, a most heartfelt thanks to Gerald Ingham of Loyola University, and to my mother, Mrs. Maria Angeli Ricci, who immeasurably eased the burden of translation from four languages.

The variant edition of a portion of Mengarini's "Memorie" contained in George Gibbs, Contributions to American Ethnology, has been reproduced with the permission of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

My research for this project was made possible by a Haynes Dissertation Fellowship awarded by the University of Southern California, 1967-68.

To all, my heartfelt thanks.

PART I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

THE JESUITS: A BEGINNING

Before the death of its founder, Ignatius of Loyola, on July 31, 1556, the Society of Jesus had distinguished itself in the greatest councils of the Church. It had been instrumental in turning back the tide of Protestantism in Germany and elsewhere. Among its number were missionaries who had won a large part of the Orient to the Catholic faith. During his brief fifteen years as Father General, Ignatius had watched the Society reorganize Catholic education on a vast scale. All the while the number of men who had followed him in committing themselves to the motto, Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam, had grown to one thousand scattered over a hundred outposts throughout the world.[1]

"All this was accomplished despite accusations which do not deserve discussion."[2] Earliest Calvinist writers accused Jesuits of making use of mysterious and magical decrees and of performing a variety of wierd antics and contortions in subterraneous caverns from which they emerged haggard and worn.[3] In England they were reputed political plotters and spies. Ministers in the Massachusetts Bay Colony denounced them as grasshoppers and prayed for the east wind to sweep them away. The ultimate affront, however, was achieved by the Parlement of Paris which in a decree, issued August 6, 1762, presented its indictment against the Jesuits, declaring that "the Jesuits are recognized as guilty of having taught at all times, uninterruptedly, and with the approbation of their superiors and generals, simony, blasphemy, sacrilege, the black art, magic, astrology, impiety idolotry, superstition, impurity, corruption of justice, robbery, paricide, homocide, suicide and regicide."[4]

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[1] Thomas J. Campbell, S.J., The Jesuits, 1534-1921 (2 vols.; New York, 1921), I, 96.

[2] Actually, the approbrious connotation of the word "Jesuit" appeared before the Protestant Reformation. When laxity in the observance of their rule began to manifest itself among the once-fervent followers of St. John Columbini, they were referred to as "Jesuati," because of their frequent use of the expression, "Praised be Jesus Christ." Their name fixed itself in the common speech as a synonym of hypocrisy. It was thus an unfavorable tradition to which the Society fell heir. Ibid., pp. 1-2.

To have fostered so mighty a fury, the work of these followers of ~~Ignatius~~ must have achieved enough dramatic success to inspire both the envy and the grudging respect of the many forces competing for power in a recently reorganized Europe. Sixteenth-century Europe was now a composite of new factions seeking new alliances. Emerging nation states, dissident religious sects and aggressive mercantile interests each shrewdly and greedily veered toward the font of power wherever it lay. Thus the secular clergy, and other religious orders as well, accused the Society of harboring illuminists. Even the devout Philip II of Spain was persuaded to suspect them. The bitterness finally rose to a climax in Spain in a controversy over publication of Concordia Liberi Arbitrii by the Jesuit Luis Molina.[5] The Jesuits, possessing a traditional reputation as manifestly preeminent educators, theologians, advisors of state, and missionaries in the outposts of empire, could not in their meteoric success but incur the perfervid emnity of various of these competing factions.[6]

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[3] Ibid., p. 4.

[4] Ibid.

Although little that the Society has attempted has escaped the cynical analysis of competitors and critics, this study, consisting of the edited memoirs of Father Gregory Mengarini, S.J., clearly proves that when removed from the center of power, the dedication of members of the Society did not falter. Fervor was not cooled by the unwelcome winters in the remote Rocky Mountains. Vigor and enterprise and commitment to education were not abandoned even in the midst of the bustle of gold-rush California.

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[5] J[ames] H. Elliott, Imperial Spain, 1469-1716 (New York, 1963), pp. 241-44.

[6] The most Catholic of historians, Menendez y Pelayo, observed: "In my opinion it was most unfortunate that the Renaissance fell into the hands of the Jesuits, where it degenerated into college rhetoric." Jean Descola, A History of Spain (New York, 1963), p. 339.

On the other hand, by the middle of the seventeenth century the Jesuits had become the principal educators of Spain. In 1625 Philip IV founded the Imperial College of Royal Studies of San Isidro, directed by the Jesuits. By design it was intended to educate the elder sons of the Spanish nobility. Rhea M. Smith, Spain in Modern History (Ann Arbor, 1965), p. 220.

Such zealous commitment to the work of the Society in its most humble aspects is seen readily in Mengarini's original request to be assigned to the foreign missions. In a letter written to the Jesuit provincial in Rome, December 25, 1839, his searing fervor and selflessness is clearly evident.

> I request of Your Paternity, assignment to the foreign missions and if you should ask where, I would answer any place, but my heart has been and always remains there where the poor souls have no one to help them escape the hands of the devil, and where there is the greatest hope, in fact, to give both life and blood for the love of Jesus, our Captain. Let my testimony be the tears of happiness as I write this.[7]

Gregory Mengarini was not simply a young Roman aristocrat charmed by the then voguish pursuit of the "noble savage." The commitment of the members of the Society to the conversion of souls along the outer perimeter of western civilization had long preceded the romantic disquisitions of Jean Jacques Rousseau. The clear-eyed young scholastic was committed to living the life of an evangelist isolated from his land and his people. His firm chin hinted that he was not one to be dissuaded. Indeed, he was determined to participate in a tradition originally begun in response to an appeal made for missionaries to Peru by Philip II. By March, 1568, seven Jesuits had been stationed at Callao, while six other Jesuits were already serving in Sao Paolo, Brazil.

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[7] Gregory Mengarini to Reverend Father General John Roothaan, S.J., Rome, December 25, 1839, MS, GASJ. Consult Appendix A.

Even earlier, in April, 1541, Francis Xavier, S.J., had sailed from Lisbon to Goa, the capital of Portuguese India. From thence he had journeyed to Japan and presented himself to the Daimyo of Yamaguchi. Arrayed in splendid attire, he offered his credentials, engrossed on parchment, along with an abundant supply of rich gifts--an arquebus, a spinnet, mirrors, crystal goblets, books, spectacles, even a clock. Though Xavier was never to present his credentials as Papal Nuncio to the court of the emperor of China, other Jesuits, including the famous Father Mateo Ricci, were admitted within the imperial wall in 1552.[8]

While some members of the Society explored the antipodes, and others responded to Tudor heresy with martyrdom, another contingent labored in Africa. During the period from 1547 to 1561, the Congo and Angola were visited and missions were established. Unfortunately, violence brought temporary interruption to the work of the Society there.

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[8] Campbell, The Jesuits, I, 80.

In the New World Jesuit efforts advanced along four fronts, operating under the banners of each of the competing imperial powers in the Americas. Under the viceroy of New Spain, the Society extended its efforts to Baja California, to the Gulf of Mexico and in 1595 established the college and seminary of San Jose in Manilla, the farthest reaches of New Spain.[9]

To the north, Jesuits arrived as early as 1611 in Port Royal, Acadia. This effort as well as another launched in Quebec in 1629 was interrupted as a result of the French capitulation to the English. In 1632, however, the most heroic chapter of the Society's missionary life began. As vividly described in the Jesuit Relations, the published reports of the Society's missionaries, for the next four decades, the Jesuits experienced incredible hardships and martrydom. They opened missions along the coast, on the banks of the St. Lawrence, on the shores of the Hudson's Bay, and as far south as the Gulf of Mexico.[10]

A much more conventional setting was provided for the Jesuits in Lord Calvert's Maryland Colony, a proprietorship granted as a result of Stuart friendship. From 1634 to the Suppression in 1773, there remained an average of four priests in residence to serve 3,000 colonists. After the first forty years this number increased to forty-two. Soon the Jesuits labored not only in Maryland but also among the Indians of Pennsylvania, until the Society met with the disapprobation of King William following the Glorious Revolution of 1688.

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[9] John Edwin Fagg, Latin America, A General History (New York, 1963), pp. 145-47.

[10] A[dolphe] F. Bandelier, "Society of Jesus," The Catholic Encyclopedia (15 vols.; New York, 1912), XIV, 81-111.

The Suppression of 1773 altered but little this basic pattern, since the Jesuits were the only priests in the English colonies. Most of these men remained until their death and during the period of the Suppression continued to don their black robes with the approval of their superior Father John Lewis, who had received the power of vicar-general after the Suppression. Some American Jesuits under Father John Carroll, who had returned from Europe, travelled among the French Canadians attempting to inspire their support of a possible American revolution.

Religious toleration was not the case, however, in the viceroyalty of New Granada. Here the Society had experimented with a series of reductions or villages where the natives were brought back (re, ducir) from the wilds and forests by the preachings of the missionaries. Beginning in 1609 with the first reduction in the present Brazilian territory of Parana, their numbers grew from 58 to 118 in 1677. The program was thus extended from the colonies of Portugal to those of Spain. In addition to a program of training which was also intended to lead to economic self-sufficiency, the reduction stressed complete separation from the colonial settlers.[11]

Opponents accused the Jesuits of setting up in the missions a state quite independent of the Spanish Crown.[12] To this accusation may be added the fury of the Portuguese Marquis de Pombal whose efforts to marry the Princess Maria to the Protestant Duke of Cumberland had been circumvented by the advice of the king's Jesuit confessor. In retaliation a treaty with Spain in 1750 unceremoniously expelled the Jesuits from Portuguese colonies. In France the final knell sounded in 1765. In 1769 Bourbon Charles III of Spain and the king of Naples followed suit. Up to that date, enemies had destroyed about half the Society's organization, leaving about 10,000 Jesuits in thirteen provinces.[13]

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[11] A detailed account of the Jesuit reductions in Paraguay is found in R. B. Cunningham Green, Vanished Arcadia (London, 1910), and Giovanni Muratori, Il Cristianism Felice, in Missione Della Provincia Torinese Della Compagnia Di Gesu Nelle Montagne Rocciose Della America Settentrionale (Turin, 1863). It had been read widely before that time, however. In fact De Smet claims to have made a Vade Mecum (translated: preplan) of it before leaving for the Flatheads the second time, for he fully intended to pattern the Rocky Mountain missions upon the Paraguayan reductions.

[12] Michael P. Harney, S.J., The Jesuits in History (New York, 1941), pp. 330-39.

[13] Campbell, The Jesuits, II, 530-37.

Not until July 21, 1773, was sufficient political pressure brought to bear upon Pope Clement XIV to issue the Brief of Suppression. The General of the Society, Lorenzo Ricci, was accused of concealment of vast sums of money, among numerous other accusations.[14]

But not all of Europe played to the tune of the Bourbon piper. On July 7, 1770, Frederick of Prussia wrote to Voltaire:

> The good Cordelier of the Vatican lets me keep my dear Jesuits whom they persecute everywhere. I will guard the precious seed so that some day I may supply it to those who may want to cultivate that rare plant in their countries.[15]

More surprising still was the protection accorded the Society by Empress Catherine II of Russia who respected the Jesuits for their educational services and loyalty, particularly in parts of Poland recently acquired by the Partition of 1772. Indeed, she made it possible to provide an unbroken link between the old and new Society. No promulgation of the Brief _Dominus ac redemptor_ was ever allowed. Consequently, for forty years a small remnant of the Society lived on in White Russia and Lithuania. Because of her abhorence of the spirit French Philosophism and her new interest in mathematics and the physical sciences, the Tsarina and the first minister Potemkin established Polotsk College under the direction of the Jesuit scientist Gabriel Gruber. Others of the Society were asked to preach and minister to Russian subjects relocated in the distant region of Astkrakahn.[16]

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[14] Some historians conclude that the "Brief of Suppression" provided a powerful incentive as well as moral support for the Jansenists, who derived an implied approval of their position from the pontifical declaration. By curious coincidence, the leader of this movement was a member of the same family as that of Lorenzo Ricci's, the Father General of the Society. It was Scipio Ricci of Florence, Bishop of Pistoia, who convened the Jansenists soon upon the heels of the Suppression. Campbell, _The Jesuits_, II, 609.

[15] _Ibid_., p. 637.

Finally, in August 1814, Pope Pius VII restored the Society of Jesus. Moved by the recommendations of Tsar Paul I, King Ferdinand of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, and the almost unanimous request of the Christian world now fully recognizant of the richly fruitful successes of the Jesuits, they were again allowed "to serve the Pope throughout the whole world at whatsoever task he should wish to assign."[17]

Twenty-five years later, in 1839, Bishop Joseph Rosati of St. Louis, in response to the pleas for Black Robes made by the Flathead Indians, appealed to the Father General of the Society for missionaries to serve in yet another field. The matter was referred to the provincial of the Missouri Province, Peter Verhaegen, who commissioned

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[16] Harney, The Jesuits in History, pp. 347-64.

[17] Ibid., p. 364.

Pierre Jean De Smet to visit the western country and to decide on the possibility of establishing missions among the native tribes. De Smet returned to St. Louis in 1841 and submitted a report to Bishop Rosati and Father Verhaegen which strongly urged that work among the Flathead Indians begin at once. Accordingly, plans were made to send priests to that far western field.[18]

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[18] Sister Letitia Mary Lyons, Francis Norbert Blanchet and the Founding of the Oregon Missions (Washington, D.C., 1940), p. 62.

CHAPTER II

ALONG THE AMERICAN FRONTIER
AFTER THE SUPPRESSION

Following the restoration of the Society of Jesus, its missionary activities advanced in all directions, even toward the Oregon Country.[1] At the same time, within the American mind the period seemed auspicious for advance upon and acquisition of lands bordering the "Southern Sea." Commerce was becoming a mighty factor along the Great Lakes. There was talk of an Erie Canal. Perhaps as a consequence, a contagious spell of wanderlust touched citizens from all parts of the United States. In response the frontier moved out beyond the Blue Grass region of Kentucky into Ohio and Alabama, soon edging its way into lower Illinois. Restless growth pushed pioneers westward toward Missouri along the trappers' trails into the disputed Oregon Country. Among them were vast crowds of immigrants from Ireland and Germany whose numbers were to multiply from the 1840s to the 1870s.

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[1] As a result of the proportion of religious vocations to the total Catholic population, the United States was considered a missionary field until the middle of the twentieth century.

During these same years the political climate in Europe had forced Jesuits to turn ever more to the mission fields.[2] Belgian Jesuits, for example, were unable to return to their homeland until its separation from Protestant Holland in 1830. During the French Revolution of 1830, which toppled Charles X, mobs sacked several Jesuit novitiates. During the Spanish Revolution of 1820, twenty-five Jesuits were murdered and others beaten, for the Society had been accused of having caused an epidemic of cholera.[3]

Upheavals throughout the 1840s in several emerging nation states, particularly Italy, accounted for the roster of the Society's missionaries in the United States.[4] It also resulted in the eventual administration of the mission by the Turin Province.[5]

Despite these factors which encouraged Jesuit missionary expansion, the period immediately after the Restoration of the Society gave little ground for hope. Resources were so lacking that the Fathers were hard put to maintain their parishes in Maryland and Pennsylvania and their college at Georgetown. A band of Belgian youths who had entered the novitiate at Whitemarsh nearly faced dismissal because of lack of funds. Not until the forties with its increasing number of Catholic immigrants did the Society see definite growth in the established urban centers, albeit while enduring the menaces of nascent "Know-Nothingism."

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[2] Requisitions for Jesuits were usually met with the statement of fact that members of the Society were either too young or too old for such work, since the training of priests had been brought to a virtual standstill during the Suppression. Thomas Hughes, History of the Society of Jesus in North America, Colonial and Federal Documents (2 vols.; New York, 1910), I, 107.

[3] Campbell, The Jesuits, II, 738-64.

[4] The hostility was not solely directed toward the Jesuits. During the Italian Revolution of 1848, Rossi, the Pope's prime minister, was stabbed to death. Palma, the papal prelate, was shot to death while standing at a window, and the Pope himself was besieged in the Quirinal Palace. Ibid., p. 756.

[5] Harney, The Jesuits in History, p. 405.

At the same time, fortuitous developments in the mission fields of the middle United States provided an opportunity for religious labors for these exiles still faithfully committed to the Society despite its weakened state. Bishop Louis William du Bourg, administrator of New Orleans, while in Rome for his episcopal consecration in 1815, first requested Jesuit missionaries for his far-flung diocese of Louisiana. The frontier bishopric consisted of the territory west of the Mississippi, reaching indefinitely to the northwest and comprising the bulk of the Indian territory. The diocese itself was bounded by the dioceses of Kentucky and Florida on the east and the "Sea of the South" to the west.

Although Bishop du Bourg at first failed to secure the aid of the Society in assisting him, he did engage the services of Lazarist Father Joseph Rosati (who in 1827 became the bishop of Upper Louisiana).[6] But despite his added pleadings for Jesuit missionaries, the Father General found it difficult to add to the small band of United States Jesuits centered at the Maryland mission. It was not until 1833 that the pleas of another bishop of New Orleans, Antoine Blanc, persuaded Father General John Roothaan to assign four young Jesuits to the vast diocese. Among these were Father Nicolas Point, then in Spain, later destined to join Fathers Pierre Jean De Smet and Gregory Mengarini among the Flatheads.[7]

Jesuit aid on another front came even sooner. In 1823 a handful of Jesuits had been assigned to catechize among the frontier Indians who still remembered the "Black Gowns" of half a century before. With the support of the Propaganda Fide, Bishop du Bourg had appealed directly to the General of the Society, Father Aloysius Fortis. Upon the advice of Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, this was followed in 1823 by Bishop du Bourg's proposal to Father Van Quickenborne,[8] Master of Novices at Whitemarsh, that he would be given a tract of land near the See at St. Louis if the Jesuits would establish a novitiate there.[9]

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[6] Point, Wilderness Kingdom, p. 46.

[7] Hughes, History of the Society, I, 107-10.

[8] Rev. Charles Felix Van Quickenborne was born in 1788 in Ghent and died near St. Charles, Missouri. He was the first Jesuit to enter the Mississippi Valley after the re-establishment of the Society. Hiram M. Chittenden and Alfred D. Richardson, eds., Life, Letters and Travels of

The company, headed by Van Quickenborne, set out from Whitemarsh in April 1823. Three wagons carried personal articles as far as Wheeling on the Ohio River, where the group purchased two flatboats. The company of twelve, however, made the entire trip "pedibus apostolorum, staff in hand," as Father Pierre Jean De Smet put it.[10] The seven novices, three lay brothers and two priests finally arrived at what was to be their new novitiate at Florissant, only to find that more pressing work among the whites, now pouring into the new country and forming settlements in Missouri and Illinois, was to demand their attention for decades. Van Quickenborne at one place discovered 600 Catholics where only eight had been known. At the same time, the Society advanced the cause of education at St. Louis College and later at St. Xavier's College in Cincin-

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Father Pierre Jean De Smet, 1801-1872 (4 vols.; New York, 1905), I, 151.

[9] Calhoun's actions can be in part explained by the fact that issues relating to Indian affairs fell under the jurisdiction of the War Department, although not as a separate bureau until 1824. Calhoun's proposed removal of the Indians would appear less inhumane and the dispossessed tribesmen would be more quiescent if ministered to by a Christian missionary. It was assumed. William F. Hagan, American Indians (Chicago, 1961), pp. 74-79.

[10] Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 5.

nati. The independent mission status of 1830, Father Roothaan changed to vice-province a decade later.

Among the work accomplished by the small group was a project outlined by Pierre Jean De Smet. Though still five years from ordination, he wanted work--missionary work--to be achieved by building a boarding school for Indian boys where not only Catichism, but reading, writing, spelling, tool forging, blacksmithing and carpentry would be taught. The plan sounded good to General William Clark, superintendent for Indian Affairs for the government in the area. He stirred the interest of Andrew Jackson in the White House, and soon Secretary of War Calhoun had signed an appropriation for the support of St. Regis Seminary.[11]

As funds diminished, however, and the Indians loaded their ponies and pulled their teepees farther west, De Smet heard the empty echo of defeat. He was to hear it again at the mission to the Kickapoo, and later among the Potawatomies.

Upon De Smet's return from assignment in Europe from 1833 to 1837, the young priest was chosen to serve as resident missionary to 2000 Potawatomi Indians recently settled among the Missouri River in what was later the Nebraska Territory. Senator Thomas Hart Benton and General Clark, with the support of President Martin Van Buren, favored the plan in hope that a Jesuit would provide a sufficiently powerful scourge against the "blood-wild" neighboring Sioux, the gambling, laziness and the whiskey. "When the Potawatomies received their government pension money, they poured it out for liquor; and after the cash was gone, they bartered blankets, horses, food--even their own children--for drink. Then they murdered and mutilated--hacking at each other's ears and noses with bloody knives."[12]

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[11] Harney, Jesuits in History, pp. 403-04.

In addition to the distress the Jesuit missionary felt at being surrounded by examples of superstition, polygamy and plague, he expressed particular distress at the neglected condition of the children, adding: "Their hair seems never to have undergone the operation of a brush so that their heads look like masses of cobwebs. Many have eye trouble, and their faces and all their limbs look as if water never touched them."[13]

It was during the second year at St. Mary's mission among the Potawatomi, near Council Bluffs, that two strange Indians beached their canoe on the muddy bank of the

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[12] Michael McHugh, S.J., "A Dream Went West," I Lift My Lamp, Jesuits in America, ed. by John P. Leary, S.J. (Westminster, Maryland, 1955), p. 162. Andrew M. Jung, Jesuit Missions Among the American Tribes of the Rocky Mountain Indians (Spokane, 1925), deals extensively with the subject.

[13] Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 158; William L. Davis, S.J., "Peter John De Smet: Missionary to the Potawatomi, 1837-1840," Pacific Northwest Quarterly, XXXII (April, 1942), 123-52.

Missouri. In recounting this first meeting with Pierre Goucher and Young Ignace, De Smet recalled:

> On the 18th of last September two Catholic Iroquois came to visit us. They had been twenty-three years among the nation called the Flatheads and the Pierced Noses, about a thousand Flemish leagues from where are [St. Joseph Mission, Council Bluffs]. I have never seen any savages so fervent in religion. . . . All that tribe strictly observe Sunday and assemble several times a week to pray and sing canticles. . . . We gave them letters of recommendation for our Reverend Father Superior at St. Louis. They thought nothing of adding another three hundred leagues to the thousand they had already accomplished, in the hope that their request would be granted.[14]

This had not been the first plea for priests to come from the Oregon Country. As early as 1821 Hudson's Bay Company employees, mostly French Canadians and Iroquois, sent a petition for spiritual aid to Father Rosati, Vicar-General of Upper Louisiana. His response was that it was impossible to meet their wishes. In 1834 this same group petitioned the Catholic hierarchy in Canada to arrange with George Simpson, governor of Rupert's Land of the Hudson's Bay Company domain, for the assignment of a Catholic missionary to serve at the Cowlitz River Station in undisputed British-American territory.[15]

Finally, in 1838 the Very Reverend Francis Norbert Blanchet, Vicar-General to the Bishop of Quebec, with Father

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[14] Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 29-30.

[15] Clarence B. Bagley, Early Catholic Missions in Old Oregon (Seattle, 1932), p. 62.

Modeste Demers, his associate, "crossed the Rocky Mountains through the Athabaska pass, and descended the Columbia River to Fort Vancouver, where they established the first Catholic mission in the Oregon country."[16]

The first notions the Northwest Indians had about Christianity had been offered by Christian Iroquois of the Caughnawaga mission, perhaps of the original 1811 group in the employ of Hudson's Bay Company agents such as Nicholas Pambrizi. Two decades later, Captain Benjamin L. Bonneville and Nathaniel Wyeth, American fur traders, upon arrival among the Nez Perce, well before missionaries had arrived, found them familiar with Christian teachings.

At Fort Colville on November 6, 1838, a large number of Colvilles, Pen d'Oreilles, Spokanes and Flatheads flocked to see the French priests. Abbé Blanchet assembled them several times during his three-day stay to instruct them in the elements of religion. Among them were some so desirous of learning more about the Faith, that they seriously expressed a desire to acquire their own Black Robe. Imagining that they could buy one, they inquired of the Canadians how many horses and beavers it would take to have one of these "chiefs of the French" stay with them, saying: "He would want for nothing."[17]

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[16] Major Edward Mallet, "Origin of the Flathead Mission of the Rocky Mountains," Records of the Catholic Historical Society, II (1889), 196; Gilbert J. Garraghan, The Jesuits of the Middle United States (3 vols.; New York, 1938), II, 271.

An even more dramatic appeal for missionaries had been laid before Bishop Rosati and the Society during that same decade--an appeal which had culminated in the visit to De Smet among the Potawatomies. In 1831 a party of four Indians of either the Flathead or Nez Perce nation, one or both, appeared in St. Louis.[18] Since the number of the Fathers at the Missouri mission fell altogether below actual needs, the distant enterprise was impossible. But their appeal for Jesuit missionaries was to be repeated by a second deputation of Rocky Mountain Indians which arrived in St. Louis in 1835. This time the Flatheads had clearly commissioned Old Ignace, an Iroquois, to plead for a priest. He arrived in St. Louis with his two sons in the fall of 1835.[19] But again, no priest, only a promise, accompanied them upon their return. Consequently, a fresh deputation was dispatched in 1837. Old Ignace was once again at its head. It was this group that met death at the hands of the hostile Sioux at Ash Hollow, Nebraska.[20]

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[17] Bagley, Early Catholic Missions, p. 52.

[18] A strong argument favoring the latter tribe is offered by Clifford M. Drury, "The Nez Perce Delegation of 1831," Oregon Historical Society Quarterly, XL (September, 1939), 283-87. Further discussion is offered by Garraghan, Jesuits of the Middle United States, II, 246-47.

[19] "Memoires du R. P. Ferdinand Helias d'Huddegham." Ibid., p. 247.

Not until 1839, the fourth and final attempt, was success achieved. Left-handed Pierre Gaucher and Young Ignace upon reaching Council Bluffs were to fulfill the designs of Providence;[21] the appeals to Father General Roothaan had born fruit. Pierre Jean De Smet was appointed to join the Flatheads that spring. Soon the teachings of the Society would extend from Baltimore to the shores of the Pacific. With this joyous news young Gaucher returned to the long suppliant Flatheads, leaving Ignace behind to serve as guide to De Smet.

On April 24, 1841, De Smet was eager to hit the trail to the Oregon Country at a hard gallop. With his Iroquois companion, who served as guide and interpreter, he raced along the Platte River into western Wyoming where

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[20] Chapter IV of Mengarini's "Memorie" offers the most detailed and accurate description of the event in the opinion of researchers in the field.

[21] Although drawing from firsthand accounts, it appears that Mengarini confused the delegations, as did Father Joset in his official report to Father General Peter Beckx on December 29, 1868. Even Bishop Rosati, writing at a much earlier date, October 20, 1839, erroneously claims that the first group was composed of Flatheads. He too errs in the number of delegations. Bagley, Early Catholic Missions, pp. 94-95.

An accurate and detailed account of these events is provided by both Lawrence Palladino, S.J., Indian and White in the Northwest, A History of Catholicity in Montana, 1831 to 1891 (2nd ed.; Lancaster, Pa., 1922), pp. 7-30, and Garraghan, Jesuits of the Middle United States, II, 236-346.

Flathead scouts guided him north along the Rockies into Montana.[22]

De Smet's arrival heralded a signal feat. The Jesuits had now breached the heartland of the Northwest, both by land and by sea. Missionaries traveled from Lachine to Vancouver along the Hudson's Bay Company's well worn routes. Others followed De Smet's trek overland from Westport along what would become the Oregon Trail. Still others sailed from various European ports to reach the distant Columbia River shore.[23]

But as a harbinger of Jesuits to come, De Smet pressed on to his destination. He crossed the Snake River at the lower end of Jackson's Hole to Teton Pass and into the valley of Pierre's Hole at the foot of the Three Tetons. There he met the main camp of the Flatheads, numbering about 1600. In their company he traveled to Jefferson Fork, arriving at the source of the Missouri River on August 21, 1840.[24]

The two-month mission with the Flatheads, which consisted of religious instructions three or four times a day, resulted in the conversion of one hundred and fifty adults and two hundred children. That brief sixty days also allowed De Smet to arrive at some plan which he could propose to his co-operator in the "Vineyard of the Lord," the Very Reverend Francis Blanchet. Rather than remain at his post, De Smet planned to go back to St. Louis before the winter and return in the spring with a caravan of missionaries. As he explained in a letter to Blanchet, August 10, 1840:

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[22] Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 193-94.

[23] William L. Davis, S.J., A History of St. Ignatius Mission (Spokane, 1954), p. 1.

[24] Edwin V. O'Hara, "De Smet in the Oregon Territory," Oregon Historical Quarterly, X (September, 1909), 144; Thomas P. Campbell, "Father De Smet," The Indian Sentinel, VI (Winter, 1916), 4-6.

> The Shoshones and Serpents [Snakes] desire to have an establishment; the Tetes Plates and Pen d'Oreilles having nothing more at heart. The Nez Perces seemed to be tired with these self-dubbed ministers a femmes and show a great predilection for Catholic priests.[25]

There was much to occupy missionaries in the mountains, he assured Blanchet, and he fervently hoped to secure a small corps to aid in the task at hand. The field was ripe for harvest; it merely awaited the laborers. That destined band, recruited from Italy, Belgium, France, would soon gather at Westport, on the fringe of American settlement, to assume the challenging burden.

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[25] De Smet to Blanchet, Fork of Jefferson River, August 10, 1840, quoted in Bagley, Early Catholic Missions, p. 97.

CHAPTER III

THE PROTESTANT RESPONSE

As Jesuit missionaries advanced upon a score of missionary fields, including the disputed Oregon Country, a combination of forces inextricably shifted the attention of Americans westward. The dream of a continental empire expressed in the letters of a youthful John Adams while still a student at Harvard College had also been cultivated by his political adversary, Thomas Jefferson, who had endorsed several ventures into the continental heartland. By the 1830s the dream of a "passage to India" across a united continent had matured into a patriotic axiom. Westerners like Jackson and Clay reminded prospering Americans that their progress would inevitably lead them westward to a wonderous Xanadu. It was America's "manifest destiny!" William Gilpin as well as Thomas Hart Benton and Hall J. Kelly avoided no opportunity to remind Americans that before them still lay their "untransacted destiny," to subdue a continent.[1]

By 1840 the prospect of greater economic opportunity in the fertile Oregon Country appeared like the promised millennium, especially to the farmers along the western tier of the Mississippi basin. Along with other Americans across the nation, they had felt the economic strictures resulting from the panic of 1837. As many had done twenty years before, after the panic of 1819, distraught farmers responded to the lure of western vacant lands. As soon as their crops were harvested and sold, debts were paid or ignored, what little profits remained were used to stake the overland journey along the western trails to a more promising land.

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[1] Henry Nash Smith, The Virgin Land (New York, 1950), p. 40.

As the 1840s advanced, Oregon fever was heightened by descriptions of the transportation facilities afforded by the Columbia and the favorable markets for Oregon products in the Orient and the Pacific. The productivity of the fertile Willamette Valley made immigration even more enticing. No less was the mood stirred by the idea of a pioneer spirit, "the 'strong bent' of men's spirits, the desire to blaze new trails, to accept a difficult challenge, the thrill of opening a new country, as the long hunters had done in the Kentucky wilderness."[2]

But the westward pursuit of the "star of empire" was also the product of less idealistic socio-economic considerations. Increasing waves of foreign settlers, in many cases dislocated by the series of liberation wars sweeping across Europe in the 1830s and 1840s, had altered the population pattern along the eastern seaboard. In 1831 foreign immigrants numbered 22,633. In 1842 the number of newly-arrived foreigners exploded, reaching 104,564. Irish and German immigrants predominated, in part because of Germany's restrictive legislation against Jews, and because of economic distress in northern Ireland and factionalism in southern Ireland.[3] This influx not only resulted in an "urban press," but the implied threat to established patterns fed the nascent forces of "nativism" which would burst into full flower in the Know-Nothingism of the 1850s. Attendant upon this apprehension of foreigners was a growing suspicion of "popery" to which most immigrant arrivals adhered. News that Catholic missionaries were laboring in the Oregon Country provided yet another reason for a fervent advance upon the Northwest.

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[2] Ray A. Billington, Westward Expansion, A History of the American Frontier (3rd ed.; New York, 1967), p. 52.

This unique phenomenon among Protestants, missionary activity among the frontier Indians, ignored in large part since the days of the Reverends John Eliot and Samuel Kirkland of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, was motivated from many sides. In 1833 the Second Provincial Council of the Catholic Church in the United States met at Baltimore.

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[3] Richard B. Morris, ed., Encyclopedia of American History (rev. ed.; New York, 1967), pp. 471-72.

That assembly petitioned Rome to place the care of the Indian missions in the United States under the care of the Society of Jesus. Rome acceded the following year.

Anti-Catholic sentiments, which resulted in the 1841 burning of the Ursuline Convent in Boston and which were heightened by Bishop John Hughes' opposition to forced Catholic support of public education by means of rate bills in New York, was galvanized by the prospect of Jesuits overrunning the Oregon Country.[4]

Virulent feelings against the Jesuits in the United States approached a level of demonic melodrama; they were reflected in the popular literature of the day. Horror literature, charging Jesuits with casuistry and treasonous plots, appeared under such prejudice-labeled titles as Jesuit Juggling, Intrigues of Jesuitism and A Night with the Jesuits in Rome.[5]

In a letter to his sister, Pierre Jean De Smet referred to this tense mood: "It seems that panic has taken possession of the Protestant ministers because of the national council of the bishops of the United States which took place in the month of October last. . . . The awful inquisition is about to be established in this beautiful country, the land of liberty."[6]

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[4] Stephen L. Dubuisson, S.J., "A Sketch of the Maryland Province Written a Hundred Years Ago," The Woodstock Letters, LXX (October, 1941), 375.

[5] Robert Ignatius Burns, S.J., The Jesuits and the Indian Wars of the Northwest (New Haven and London, 1966), p. 31.

But the vigorous renewal of missionary activity among American Protestants did not only grow from a fear that despotic Jesuitism would soon reign over the ruins of traditional Protestantism. In explaining the enthusiastic response to the request for missionaries made by the Indian delegation to St. Louis in 1831, several other trends must be considered.[7]

By the 1830s Lyman Beecher had sounded the clarion call for social reform. The ensuing militant liberalism and sense of social responsibility, found especially among New England Protestants, sought expression. Not only did the concern extend to Wendell Phillips and Theodore Parker; beyond the issue of abolitionism lay the fortunes of the "noble savage." To the vogue of reform had been added the spirit of romanticism, then flourishing in American arts and letters. The idealized image of the primitive beatified by Rousseau in Emile was soon accompanied by an

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[6] Rev. Pierre Jean De Smet to his sister, Rosalie, St. Louis, February 1, 1830, as quoted in William L. Davis, "Peter John De Smet, the Years of Preparation, 1801-1837," Pacific Northwest Quarterly, XXXII (April, 1941), 190; Ray A. Billington, The Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860 (New York, 1938), pp. 118-41.

[7] Often referred to as the "Flathead Delegation," there is continuing discussion as to its actual composition. The various possible combinations are examined by Garraghan, Jesuits of the Middle United States, II, 243, note 19.

American counterpart in James Fenimore Cooper's Natty Bumpo. If the Leather Stocking Tales did not rouse the admiration of the urbane, there was also the image of the noble Sacajawea leading white men to the "great western sea."[8]

These two facets of the American mentality were more than receptive to the noble entreaties of the Indian delegation which in 1831 went to St. Louis, purportedly in pursuit of the "Great Book of Life." Church groups, not yet rent by sectionalism and the issue of slavery, eagerly responded. Lyman Beecher toured the East with his "Plea for the West," and the American Protestant Vindicator urged the formation of Flathead societies.[9]

It is obvious from the foregoing that the Oregon missionary movement was stimulated by more than the publication of William Walker's letter in the February 18, 1833, issue of the New York Christian Advocate. Appearing as part of a letter written by George P. Disoway, the story soon carried by the Protestant press was that these Indians had come in search of the Bible or "The White Man's Book," which was not given to them.

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[8] Vernon L. Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought (2 vols.; New York, 1954), II, 313-42.

[9] Attributed to these Indians is an eloquent oration delivered at a banquet before their departure, in which one of the Flatheads expressed his disappointment at not securing the coveted book. Garraghan, Jesuits of the Middle United States, II, 244.

The impact of this account is captured in the following passage written by Mrs. Wilbur Fisk, the wife of the president of Weslyan College. She described the event to Samuel Leckey with the following words:

> The evening the Advocate arrived which contained the account of the four flat Head Indians visiting St. Louis in search of the white man's God, my dear husband . . . came to me and observed that he had something interesting to read. . . . The next day he began to take measures, to collect funds for this mission, and I believe that between $700 and $800 were raised in our small Citty to assist in its outfit.[10]

Among historians, however, the theory has been advanced that Protestant missionary activity was fostered long before the appearance of the delegations Mengarini refers to in the "Memorie." For example, one view is that the development of the missionary movement to Oregon was supported by several Protestant denominations in both the United States and England long before 1833.[11] Others proposed as early as 1820 to the American Board of Commissions for Foreign Missions that the rude and barbarous coast of the Northwest be settled and the Indians converted. That proposal, however, was reversed, when the Reverend Jonathan Green, sailing on the Volunteer, offered an adverse report after visiting the coast.[12]

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[10] Wade C. Barclay, History of the Methodist Missions (3 vols.; New York, 1950), II, 200. For further Protestant reaction to the appearance of the delegation, see George P. Disoway's letter, although it perpetuates the fallacy of Flathead deformity, in the New York Christian Advocate, March 1, 1833, reprinted in Hiram Chittenden, The American Fur Trade of the Far West (2 vols.; New York, 1935), II, 894-905.

[11] J. Orin Oliphant, "A Project for a Christian Mission on the Northwest Coast of America, 1798," Pacific Northwest Quarterly, XXXVI (April, 1945), 99-114, and his article, "George Simpson and the Oregon Missions," Pacific Historical Review, VI (September, 1937), 213-48.

Another avenue of proselytization was the education of selected Indians at Hudson's Bay Company settlements. As early as 1825, the Reverend David T. Jones persuaded Governor George Simpson to send to Spokane Indian youths to the Red River settlement. To one was given the name "Spokan Garry" and to the other, "Kootenay Pelly." In the summer of 1829 they returned to their tribe.[13] Such was their enthusiasm that five more joined them in 1830. There Pelly died the following year. Correspondence between Dr. John McLoughlin and Simon McGillivray suggests that by this time Spokan Garry had been preaching among the tribes of the Upper Columbia for some months.[14]

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[12] George V. Blue, "Green's Missionary Report on Oregon," Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXX (September, 1929), 227-45.

[13] For a more complete account of these events, consult Thomas E. Jessett, Spokan Garry (Minneapolis, 1960); Clifford M. Drury, "Oregon Indians of the Red River School," Pacific Historical Review, XXIX (March, 1938), 50-60; Mengarini, "Memorie," Chapter IV, post.

[14] Drury would lead us to conclude that Spokan Garry's evangelism was most effective. To this end he cites a letter written on August 27, 1839, by the Reverend Asa B. Smith, a missionary of the American Board then living at

Regardless of the source of the initial impulse which galvanized Protestant evangelism, the significance lies in the fact that within months, the buckskin successors of the frontier circuit riders had sought out the upper reaches of the Missouri River. Perhaps the earliest Christian missionary to preach in what is now Montana and Idaho was the Reverend Samuel Parker of the Congregational Church of Middlefield, Massachusetts.[15] After reading the 1833 account of the Indian delegation in the Christian Advocate, he promptly decided to pursue a missionary life.

In September 1834, Jason and Daniel Lee with a party of Methodists also answered the call. This group eventually settled in Oregon, Jason Lee at a mission in the Willamette Valley and Daniel Lee along with two lay brothers at the Dalles or Narrows along the Columbia River. By 1841 other Methodist missions had been established among the Chinooks at the mouth of the Columbia. An attempt to establish yet another among the Nisqually Indians near Puget Sound foundered when the Indians disappeared.[16]

Kamiah, who notes that Lawyer, an influential Nez Perce chief, had claimed that it was the young Indian evangelist who had inspired the group to travel to St. Louis in search of Christian teachers. Drury, "Nez Perce Delegation," pp. 283-85.

[15] Stanley Davison, "Worker in God's Wilderness," Montana Magazine of Western History, VII (January, 1957), 8-17.

[16] Robert H. Blossom, "First Presbyterian on the Pacific Coast," Oregon Historical Quarterly, XV (June,

But apart from these efforts, the formal inauguration of missionary work among the Indians was sponsored by the American Board of Commissions for Foreign Missions, sustained by the Congregational, Presbyterian and Dutch Reform churches, and usually referred to as the "American Board." It was this group which had heeded promptly the "Macedonian Cry" from the Indians of Oregon. In 1836 the American Board sent a party consisting of the Rev. Henry Harmon Spalding, a missionary, and Dr. Marcus Whitman, a physician and catechist, with their wives as assistant missioners, and William H. Gray, a mechanic, to establish a mission among the Flatheads and the Nez Perce.[17]

Having been met en route by the Nez Perce as they had promised Dr. Whitman the year before, they conducted the party to their tribal land.[18] In her diary Eliza Spalding reflects upon the event of November 29, 1836: "Yesterday reached this desirable spot, where we expect to dwell the remnant of our earthly pilgrimage. As yet our dwelling is an Indian lodge, which must serve us sometime,

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1914), 81-103; George H. Himes, "Beginnings of Christianity in Oregon," Oregon Historical Quarterly, XX (June, 1919), 159-79; Joseph Williams, Narrative of a Tour from the State of Indiana to the Oregon in the Years 1841-42 (Cincinnati, 1843), pp. 26-27.

[17] William C. Brown, The Indian Side of the Story (Washington, D.C., 1961), p. 10.

[18] Mallet, "Origin of the Flathead Mission," p. 194.

for there is no preparation for a building yet."[19]

Such was the dedication of the young bride of the Rev. Spalding. Along with the recently wed Whitmans, they had made the arduous overland journey in the company of two Nez Perce boys, Tuetkas and Ites, who Whitman had taken east with him the previous autumn. On April 7, 1836, they reached Liberty, Missouri where the group awaited the arrival of the Diana, the American Fur Company's steamboat.[20]

Fortune was to draw three of the company toward Fort Vancouver. There the energetic Whitman with the aid of Mr. Gray built a station at Waiilatpu on the Walla Walla River.[21] It was there that the first Presbyterian Church in North America west of the Rockies was established among the Cayuse. Work also progressed at the Rev. Spalding's mission station at Lapwai near Clearwater.[22] By 1838 the number of workers increased as reinforcements arrived. With the group came the Reverends Cushing Eells and Elkanah Walker. Before the Indian uprising at Waiilatpu in 1847, the first chartered church organization in the West included:

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[19] Clifford C. Drury, ed., First White Women Over the Rockies (3 vols.; Glendale, Calif., 1963-1966), I, 197.

[20] Louise Barry, comp., "Kansas Before 1854: A Revised Annal," Kansas Historical Quarterly, XXIX (Spring, 1963), 45-46.

[21] Blossom, "First Presbyterians on Pacific," p. 84.

[22] Bagley, Early Catholic Missions, pp. 54-55.

> . . . six charter members including Joseph Maki and his wife Maria, Hawaiians in Whitman's employ, Charles Compo a mountain man, as well as the two Whitmans and Mrs. Spalding. As pastor Spalding was excluded. In 1838 when Mr. Gray returned, eight more were added . . . also included were twenty Nez Perce and one Cayuse convert.[23]

But the major thrust of work seemed directed toward the organization of the white settlers. On May 25, 1844, "The Presbyterian Church of Willamette Falls" was formed. On September 19, 1846, Lewis Thompson organized another at Clatsop Plains south of Astoria.[24] Settlements at Salem and Oregon City followed.

Clearly, the focus of the Protestant missioners had gradually turned toward the white settlers. Pioneers were crossing the Rockies in growing numbers and were settling in the valley of Oregon. The more stable these settlements, the more firm became the United States' claim to the land which was disputed by Great Britain.

Underlying this turning away from the native Indians was another reason, perhaps. Throughout the Protestant ranks there was a general frustration with the catechetical program. In 1839 the first printing press had arrived. The next year was spent translating and printing portions of the Bible and school books for Indian use. But of this first printing done in the Oregon Territory, the Rev. Spalding was to observe in dismay: "Every verb seems to be endless in its conjugations and combinations. I have carried an active transitive verb through several thousand forms."[25]

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[23] Clifford M. Drury, "Some Aspects of Presbyterian History in Oregon," Oregon Historical Quarterly, LVC (June, 1954), 145-59.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 146.

The frustration was compounded by the evident progress of the Catholic missionaries who found the Indians remarkably teachable. But as one judicious soul observed: "The slower pace at which they [the Catholics] led their wards toward the white man's civilization at least kept the Indians alive longer than did the Protestants with their more rapid rate of progress."[26]

More impulsive writers attributed the success of the Catholics to the fact that their rituals appealed to the savage mind. One added: "Heathenish superstitions and idolotry produce a state of mind and heart well fitted to give credence to papal superstition and idolotry."[27]

The problem of educating the Indians also beset Cushing Eells. Writing in the Missionary Herald, February 25, 1840, he noted: "I cannot learn that they have any realizing of the odiousness of sin. . . . They do not lack the ability to learn, but rather the inclination."[28]

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[25] Read Bain, "Educational Plans and Efforts by Methodists in Oregon to 1860," Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXI (March, 1920), 63-94.

[26] Bagley, Early Catholic Missions, p. 141.

[27] Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., Salvation and the Savage, an Analysis of Protestant Missions and American Indian Response, 1787-1862 (Lexington, Kentucky, 1965), p. 95.

Aware of this tendency, Jason Lee emphasized the material arts of civilization, and called his mission establishment the "Methodist Oregon Mission Indian Manual Labor School."[29] The Indians east of the Cascades were supposedly decidedly inferior to the Salishans. Since churches in the East continued to send funds, Lee simply modified his program to their needs.[30]

The frustrations felt by Lee and Eells in the Willamette Valley soon paled with the massacre of Dr. Whitman's group at their Waiilatpu mission in 1847. The immediate explanation for the atrocity appeared to be Indian suspicion of Dr. Whitman's intentions in treating the natives during a measles epidemic. Some believed that in an effort to secure Indian land, Whitman had poisoned them. The fact that this violence was followed by trouble at Spalding's Lapwai mission, and that during that same year, 1847, Mengarini reported prolonged and open dissension at St. Mary's, suggests a more generalized basis for aggression. The exploitation, the double-standards of morality exhibited by white settlers, and most of all, the loss of identity the Indian sensed as he was overwhelmed by the advancing white culture, led to these antipathies. The result was violence, or capitulation, or even withdrawal to primitivism as preached by Smohalla in the 1850s.[31]

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[28] Bain, "Educational Plans of Methodists," p. 68.

[29] *Ibid*., p. 69.

[30] Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Oregon* (2 vols.; San Francisco, 1886), I, 154-83.

Rather than joyfully rejoining the lost sheep with the flock, the missionary, both Protestant and Catholic, had served as harbinger of a socio-economic and cultural system painfully alien from the Indians' own.

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[31] Richard Forbis, "Religious Acculturation Among the Flathead Indians" (unpublished Master's thesis, Montana State University, 1950), p. 23.

CHAPTER IV

ON THE TRAIL

While the American Board missionaries labored in the Oregon country, Father Pierre Jean De Smet freely pursued his own missionary dream. He found the fervor of the Flatheads was even more encouraging in reality than it had been as heresay. Having already baptized 350, he decided to return to St. Louis in order to raise funds and gather men. Soon he would return well-supplied to his "vineyard ripe for harvest." With a visionary's zeal he again climbed the precipitous "Stonies" and traversed the endless prairie land before reaching St. Louis. From there he journeyed to Philadelphia to request that a general collection be conducted throughout the diocese in support of his program. Again in New Orleans additional funds were raised.[1]

Thus with over $1000 and six boxes of useful articles, and officially designated as Superior of the Rocky Mountain missions in a memo drawn up by Father Verhaegen, De Smet began to organize for the trip to the Bitterroot Valley.[2] But first it was necessary to gather

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[1] Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 274.

[2] The group had been organized in 1840. Its membership reached five hundred, but all save one, John Bidwell,

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provisions, firearms and wagons, including four carts and an ox-drawn wagon which was to be the first ever to reach Montana.[3] Most important of all was the selection of guides and an experienced caravan captain to lead the band over the more than eight hundred leagues of land to be traversed. Before them lay six to eight months of distressful journeying across the uncharted wilderness.[4]

At length, on April 24, 1841, De Smet departed in the company of Fathers Gregory Mengarini and Anthony Eysvogels, the latter assigned to the Potawatomi mission of St. Joseph. Traveling with them were Brothers Huet, Specht and Claessens.[5] On the day they finally left St. Louis, Mengarini wrote to Father General Roothaan: "The Caravan has been found and today, April 24 . . . we are setting out

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withdrew before departure. In most cases, they had been discouraged by the lack of information regarding the land and the overland routes used to reach the Pacific coast. A more detailed description of the party that was organized is offered by Nunis, Belden, pp. 126-36; John Bidwell, "The First Immigrant Train to California," The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine, XLI (November, 1890), 106-30; LeRoy Hafen and William J. Ghent, Broken Hand, the Life Story of William Fitzpatrick, Chief of the Mountain Men (Denver, 1930), pp. 127-34; Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 272-314; Williams, Narrative of a Tour, pp. 1-18; Palladino, Indian and White in the Northwest, pp. 37-41.

[3] Schoenberg, Jesuits in Montana, p. 13.

[4] Garraghan, Jesuits of the Middle United States, II, 256.

[5] At Westport the missionaries were joined by Father Nicolas Point. Ibid., p. 258, note 56.

for Westport where we shall find Fr. Point and thence proceed to the Rocky Mountains."[6]

As the steamer Oceana pulled away from the dock for the seven-day journey up the Missouri River, many were the glances cast toward this group of foreign religious: twenty-nine-year-old William Claessens, the Belgian blacksmith; thirty-five-year-old Charles Huet, a carpenter also from Belgium; and the German, Joseph Specht, a tinner and factotem. With the Brothers was the newly ordained Gregory Mengarini, an Italian, who although only twenty-nine, had been selected by the Father General himself because of his virtues, his great facility with languages, and his knowledge of medicine and music.[7]

At a camp not far from the shore of the Kaw River near the Sapling Grove rendezvous, the missionary party was joined by what was to be the first wagon train of emigrants to the Pacific Coast.[8] According to John Bidwell, a member of the party, the sixty-four overland pioneers joined De Smet's small group of seventeen.[9] At this point De Smet had secured the assistance of Thomas "Broken Hand" Fitzpatrick as guide, whom Bidwell soon described as pilot of the whole "tho he had never been across the continent, but had been a hunter and trapper in the neighborhood of the headwaters of the Columbia."[10]

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[6] Mengarini to Father General John Roothaan, S.J., St. Louis, April 24, 1841, Mt. Sax. [illegible citation], GASJ.

[7] Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 278.

[8] William J. Ghent, The Early Far West (New York, 1931), p. 314.

[9] Nunis, Belden, pp. 131-35.

On May 10, the combined groups departed from Westport. Wagon wheels rolled along the trail leading to the Platte River. Within a week before leaving Sapling Grove, the group which had joined the Jesuits was organized. Serving as secretary was "young John Bidwell--recently a school teacher in Platte County, Mo. . . . John Bartleson (aged fifty-four, of Jackson County, Mo.) was elected Captain."[11]

Fortunately, the progress of the caravan was recorded by several members, including the missionaries' official diarist, Father Point. Of the overland life he wrote: "The duties of the guide [Fitzpatrick] were very important; thus, the Captain at early dawn gave the signal for rising and for departure and once upon the road he regulated the march and halting times; he also chose the ground for camp and looked to keeping discipline."

Of the care taken against attacks from hostile Indians, Point added:

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[10] Ibid., p. 37.

[11] Barry, "Annals of Kansas," p. 346. For a detailed discussion of the number and the members of the company, see Nunis, Belden, pp. 126-36.

> For greater security each owner of the animals tied them to stakes planted in the ground at suitable intervals; the tethers used were long enough to permit of the animals' grazing with ease. From the first moment that sleep reigned over the camp until the following daybreak each traveler in turn, even down to the priests, kept watch to guard from any surprise of the enemy.[12]

Father Point goes on to observe that the group used many precautions, particularly with the difficult to manage oxen:

> . . . whilst the first driver goaded them on from his high seat, his subordinates on horseback at either side, or on foot, in the middle of the stream, shouted and whipped them to make the team advance, and to prevent them from turning aside. For greater safety cords were stretched from the tops of the wagons, and being drawn taut by vigorous arms, they helped to keep things well balanced. The roaring waters, the bellowing of the oxen, the neighing of the horses, the excited and ear-splitting shouts of the drivers--all combined to make up the most horrid din I ever listened to; it was astonishing that we effected the passage without a mishap.[13]

An artist by instinct, Point looked with rapture on the Great Prairie and with curiosity upon the Delaware and Shawnee encampments as he and the others traveled toward the banks of the Kansas. Here two others who had taken the baggage upriver in a pirogue joined them at a crossing near Topeka.[14]

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[12] Nicolas Point, S.J., "Recollections of the Rocky Mountain Missions," The Woodstock Letters, XI (1882), 6.

[13] Ibid., p. 7.

[14] Point, Wilderness Kingdom, p. 26.

Of the company of twenty wagons, carrying seventy-seven people, fifty men were capable of managing a rifle. The number increased as stragglers joined, the last of whom was Joseph Williams, a Protestant minister from Indiana, who De Smet described as a man of "ingenious simplicity."[15] Williams noted De Smet's kindness, but also revealed a certain self-righteous anger in describing the company in his Narrative: "There were some as wicked people as I ever saw in all my life. . . . Our leader, Fitzpatrick, is a wicked, worldly man and is much opposed to missionaries going among the Indians."[16]

"So the sun rose and the sun set, and the end of the journey was still over a thousand miles away. Sometimes," Mengarini recalled, "John Grey [a hunter and trapper for the party] would say to me in the morning,

> 'Father, do you see that speck in the distance? Today we must reach there.' 'Then our days' travel will be short,' I would answer. 'We shall see,' he would say laughingly. And the hours of the morning would pass, and we would be already journeying long under a scorching afternoon's sun before that speck would assume appreciable magnitude and distinctness of form; and the last rays of the setting sun would often show us, still some miles distant, the welcome grove where we were to find water and rest.

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[15] Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 297.

[16] It is worthy of note that at no point in the narrative does Joseph Williams refer to the members of the Jesuit missionary party, brothers or priests, with the exception of De Smet who kindly offered him a serving of venison soon after their meeting. Narrative, pp. 8-9.

Of another occasion Mengarini wrote:

> John Grey went in search of a ford and came back saying that he had found one. He immediately started ahead, and the wagoners started to follow. But, as people generally do, some thought that they could find a better way for themselves and so scattered after entering the river, thus leaving it uncertain, for those that came last, what way the guide had taken. A wagon had just entered the stream when I reached the bank, and I determined to follow it. All went well for some time, and we were nearing the other bank when suddenly I beheld a wagon upset, and at the same moment I felt the earth slipping from beneath my horse's feet. I clung to the neck of the animal, if not gracefully, at least firmly; for, as I could not swim, I held on to life the more vigorously. The current was strong, but my horse was a good swimmer and in a few minutes both of us were landed on the bank. I turned to look at the wagon and saw it abandoned and floating down the stream. No lives were lost, but a man whom we called "The Major" had been in imminent danger. I retired quite a distance from the others, hung up my clothes to dry and, comfortable once more, I betook myself to camp.[17]

To those who viewed the scene, it seemed that Mengarini, clinging to the neck of his horse, formed an indivisible part of the animal.

The missionaries and their party traveled with the advance vanguard. Each day the captain, known to most Indian tribes as Tête Blanch (White Head), would give the signal to rise, and planned the march, choosing the stops to make camp. Generally, the company paused on the wooded bank of a river where the wagons would be arranged in the general pattern of a circle or a square, thus providing a secure, enclosed grazing land for the animals. From the moment camp was made until sunrise, all the company with the exception of Fitzpatrick and De Smet, stood watch.[18]

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[17] Partoll, "Mengarini's Narrative," pp. 194-95.

A small change in the routine occurred on May 11. De Smet and Point bore off to the left to visit the first village of Kansa, numbering about seven or eight hundred. Artist Point noted especially the strong character written on the faces of these Indians, the vivacity of expression, singularity of dress, and their close resemblance to the neighboring Osage, while they in turn marvelled at Father Point's bearded face since a beardless chin and well-picked brows and eyelashes were considered by them indispensable criteria of Indian beauty.[19]

The endless trek across the wilderness trail was again marked by a singular event ten days later. On the afternoon of Saturday, May 29, the company saw a waterspout twirling along. When it struck the river, it made a great foam and then passed off as a dreadful tornado.[20]

> Presently the trees on the river-bank swayed violently from side to side, numbers of them were torn from their roots, and a great mist, spreading rapidly over the river, discharged itself in a fall of hail. We dismounted until the shower was over, and then started forward again on our weary march. We had not gone far when Fr. Point saw, partially embedded in the soil, something that seemed to be a beautiful piece of quartz, oval in shape and about the size of a goose-

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[18] Point, Wilderness Kingdom, p. 26.

[19] Ibid., p. 27.

[20] Williams, Narrative, p. 9.

egg. He hastened to pick it up, and found to his and our astonishment that it was a hail-stone.[21]

As it traveled the lone party sometimes fell in with bands of Sioux and Cheyennes, but no harm ever befell them. Often they were without water. Often the road was lost. "But why speak of road," Mengarini complained, "when no such thing existed! Plains on all sides. 'Plains at morning; plains at noon; plains at night.' And this, day after day."[22]

By the end of May the prairies gave way to higher bluffs bordering the Platte River. Here there was evidence of buffalo. First, as six flatbottom boats loaded with hides floated down the shallow Platte. Soon the surrounding plains were covered with buffalo bones and skulls. Within a few days more, while traveling up the north side of the South Fork, the group saw a herd of thousands of buffalo.[23]

Thus far the journey had been relatively calm, but between Grand Island and Green River (reached July 23) a number of events occurred, "including two weddings, one death [James Shotwell] by accident, some 'desertions,' a few accessions [a company of trappers under command of Henry Fraeb] and Nicholas Dawson's encounter with Indians."[24]

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[21] Partoll, "Mengarini's Narrative," p. 194.

[22] Mengarini explains that such were the hardships that potable water was converted from putrid stagnant water found in hollows, while prairie hens, prairie cocks, and antelopes supplied needed food. Ibid., p. 195.

[23] Williams, Narrative, p. 11.

May, June, July had scorched their pathway when the group finally parted. By August 15 the party reached Fort Hall in southern Idaho.[25] Here, De Smet left the group and journeyed ahead with a small group of Flatheads who had met him the day before. Of this encounter De Smet wrote from Fort Hall:

> It was on the eve of the beautiful festival of the assumption that we met the vanguard of the Flat Heads. We met under the happiest auspices, and our joy was proportionate. The joy of the savage is not openly manifested--that of our dear neophytes was tranquil; but from the beaming serenity of their looks, and the feeling manner in which they pressed

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[24] Barry, "Annals of Kansas," p. 347. Belden adds that the Cheyenne returned Dawson's gun and pistol upon request. Demonstrating no more hostility, they traded a bit for tobacco and beads. Nunis, Belden, p. 39.

[25] Fort Hall had been built by Nathaniel Wyeth in 1834. Two years later he sold it to the Hudson's Bay Company and it was then placed under the administration of the local agent Francis Ermatinger, who, though a Protestant, extended every courtesy to the group. O'Hara, "De Smet in the Oregon Country," p. 46.

The fort, however, was under the official direction of the Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, Dr. John McLoughlin. In a letter dated September 27, 1841, he offered assistance and advice to the missionary group, noting: "And [as] our means of conveyance are not always at command, it would be necessary you sent us your list of demands in the month of January for what you require in June and in the month of July for what you may require in fall and winter." McLoughlin to De Smet, Vancouver, September 27, 1841, MS, GASJ.

> our hands, it was easy to perceive that, like the joy which has its source in virtue, theirs was heartfelt and profound. What had they not done to obtain a mission of "Black Gowns"? For twenty years they had not ceased to supplicate the Father of mercies; for twenty years, in compliance with the counsels of the poor Iroquois, who had established themselves in their tribe, they had conformed, as nearly as they could, to our creed, our manners, and even to our religious practices. In what Catholic parish was the Sunday, for example, ever more religiously observed? During the ten years just elapsed, four deputations, each starting from the banks of the Bitter Root, on which they usually assembled, had courageously ventured to St. Louis, over a space of 3,000 miles--over mountains and vallies, infested by Black Feet and other hostile tribes.[26]

The main camp had awaited his arrival while Gabriel Prudhomme, the two sons of old Ignace, young Pelchimo, and old Simon, the oldest man in the tribe whom De Smet had baptized on his previous visit, escorted the Jesuit to their campsite. The main camp had awaited De Smet's arrival between July 1 and July 16 at an agreed upon point along the Wind River. As provisions diminished the Flatheads had been forced to withdraw into the mountains. From his interpreter, Prudhomme, De Smet also learned that "the whole tribe had determined to fix upon some spot as a site for a permanent village; that, with this in view, they had already chosen two places which they believed to be suitable, that nothing but our presence was required to confirm their determination . . ."[27] The little band traveled north from Fort Hall until it reached the Beaverhead River in southwestern Montana. There the group met the rest of the tribe, who warmly greeted De Smet. On September 9, the last stage of the Jesuits' journey began. Accompanied by the Flatheads they moved toward Hell Gate. "If the road to the infernal regions," wrote Father Mengarini, "were as uninviting as that of its namesake, few I think would care to travel it."[28]

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[26] Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., Early Western Travels (32 vols.; Cleveland, 1904-1907), XXVII, 229.

[27] Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 293.

Down the steep trails lurched the first wagons to cross western Montana. Along precarious ledges the precious cargo swayed as hostile Indians, including the Bannocks, spied at a distance. Though De Smet was delighted at the prospect of meeting new tribes, Mengarini, "like a bishop donning robes and clutching his mitre, hastily put on his cassock. When asked where his gun was he confidently displayed his reliquary."[29]

Having descended to the prairie below, the group followed the Hell Gate River to which the fathers gave the name of St. Ignatius. Along its banks they camped for several days, making short scouting trips in search of a suitable place for a permanent mission. Finally, deciding upon a site on the bank of the Bitterroot, a tributary of the Flathead or the Clark River which flows in a northwesterly direction until it reaches the Columbia.[30] Here on September 24, the feast of Our Lady of Mercy, the Jesuits unhitched their squeaking carts. But at the victorious climax of this harrowing trek, the brother-cook found that food supplies were exhausted. It was Mengarini who piously replied: "God will provide. Wait!" That afternoon the Indians began to arrive with a load of buffalo meat. "Did I not tell you?" cried Mengarini triumphantly.[31]

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[28] Schoenberg, Jesuits in Montana, p. 13.

[29] Ibid.

As the faithful Indians left their offerings, they gathered around a large wooden cross De Smet had erected. All, from chief to youngest child, came forth to press their lips against it. The Society now claimed a new citadel dedicated "to the greater glory of God."

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[30] Mallet, "Origin of the Flathead Mission," p. 204.

[31] Schoenberg, Jesuits in Montana, p. 13.

CHAPTER V

GREGORY MENGARINI, THE MAN OF TWO WORLDS

Now that the arduous overland trip was over, the burden of organization fell upon one young man. Gregory Mengarini was born into a distinguished, aristocratic Roman family on the feast of St. Ignatius, July 21, 1811.[1] He entered the Society of Jesus on October 22, 1828, when barely seventeen. Later he served as instructor in grammar in Rome, Modena and Reggio. It was during this period that his particularly acute philological bent soon became evident.[2] During his second year of theology the young Jesuit heard read in the refactory of the Roman College, Bishop Rosati's account of the first Flathead delegation to St. Louis. He was immediately inspired with a desire to minister to the Indians of the Rocky Mountains.[3] In a letter to his Father Provincial, December 25, 1839, he explained that this desire had been born within him fifteen years before when he first decided to join the Society. Each of the eleven years since his entry, he added, he had implored of "Saint Francis Xavier the grace to pursue what one might call this second vocation from God."[4]

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[1] Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography (21 vols.; New York, 1937-1945), XII, 535.

[2] The Catholic Encyclopedia (15 vols.; New York, 1911), X, 188-89. This need for linguistic talent was also stressed by Fidel Grivel in Hughes, History, II, 1010.

[3] William N. Bischoff, Jesuits in Old Oregon, A Sketch of Jesuit Activities in the Pacific Northwest, 1840-1940 (Caldwell, Idaho, 1945), p. 28.

Having survived the great cholera epidemic of 1837 in Rome, the young Jesuit was ordained in 1840.[5] After subjecting himself to many trials to test the sincerity of his vocation, he was allowed to leave for the United States in the company of Father James Cotting.[6] Mengarini hastened to Leghorn in the belief that a mere estuary separated him from his fervent desire to reach the Rockies. He had hastened through his theology examinations in order to be ordained in advance in March 1840. But from the day of the Feast of St. Aloysius, June 21, until July 23, the young evangelists waited to board the Oriole.[7]

For the following weary weeks they scanned the sea's horizon for some outline of the port of Philadelphia. A storm had arisen on the Atlantic and the usual three weeks allowed for a crossing grew to eight. Though the tempest eventually passed, the wind still blew a gale. Provisions grew scarce, though a "few inches" of dried sausage was offered by a passing vessel. Consequently, Mengarini's seafarer's palate was forced to taste of shark, dolphin and sea tortoise. Not so for poor Cotting, for whom seasickness became the order of the day.[8]

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[4] Mengarini to Roothaan, Rome, December 25, 1839, GASJ.

[5] Enciclopedia Italiana (36 vols.; Rome, 1934), XXII, 854.

[6] "Father Mengarini," The Woodstock Letters, XVI (1887), 93.

[7] Mengarini, "Rocky Mountains," p. 298.

The landing in the city of "brotherly love" was no more cheerful. Despite Mengarini's facility with language, few understood the two, the costs were unexpectedly high, and the complications of travel, as Mengarini explained, were embarrassing to the two as they ventured to Baltimore and hence to Georgetown. Mengarini recalled his sinking spirit as he wrote:

> It was afternoon when we started, and evening darkened into night, and yet we were speeding onward. Late at night the train slackened its speed and stopped. Our fellow-passengers rose from their seats and went out, but why they went or whither, we did not know. We looked out into the darkness but could see no sign of a city. Nevertheless, we left the train, and to our astonishment saw those that had left us so suddenly, seated at tables and eating. "Come," said I to Fr. Cotting, "let us follow their example." "It is all a speculation," said he, and hesitated. We were indeed hungry, but knew not what to do. While thus in doubt, a noise was heard; all hastily left the place and seemed to vanish in the darkness; the lights were quickly extinguished and we remained alone. To say that we were bewildered is to express the matter mildly. All that we could see were some lights receding in the distance. Just before the lights were put out, we saw a lady and gentleman walking near us.

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[8] _Ibid_., p. 300.

> Neither Fr. Cotting nor myself knew any English, so I addressed the gentleman by "Parlez-vous Francais?" He turned inquiringly to the lady, and she answering "Pas beaucoup," both passed on. Nothing remained but to raise our hearts in a fervent Angele Dei, and this appeal was answered. Suddenly we heard a noise of shouting; the lights which had been going farther and farther, seemed now to be coming nearer and nearer, until, in a few moments, a man rushed up to us and saying something unintelligible, almost dragged us after him. We soon found ourselves dazzled by light and comfortably seated; but we felt so mortified that, for a long time, we dared not lift our eyes. It had been necessary, it seems, to cross a river and change cars; nobody, however, informed us about it, and, but for the help of our guardian angels, God alone knows what would have befallen us.[9]

It would be unusual not to ask why one of Mengarini's birth and position would have embarked upon this adventure. Without falling into the Bullitt-Freud fallacy, several practical factors led the young man as far as Georgetown, and then on across the continent in pursuit of the "wigwams of Idaho." First of all, from the days of the Genoese traders Italians had traditionally searched for the outer limits of civilization--on the Guinea Coast, in Peiping and even earlier in the Levant. The political unrest symptomatic of a fragmented Italy, callously referred to by English diplomats as a mere "geographic expression," peopled the New World with disillusioned Italian exiles.[10] The brief Napoleonic occupation had only served to humiliate, not unite.

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[9] Ibid., pp. 300-01.

[10] William L. Langer, comp., Encyclopedia of World History (3rd rev. ed.; Cambridge, Mass., 1962), p. 650.

Even those who remained, witnessed the famines, epidemics and commercial stagnation following the Congress of Vienna. They paid the increasing taxes, which rendered truthless the Italian aphorism, "chi ha pratto ha tutto" (who has land has everything).[11] Inevitably, these factors in combination with such realities as a population density of one hundred and thirteen persons per square mile in 1900 led to a psychology of deprivation.[12] In contrast to the poverty of the Venice and the Mezzogiorno (to the south) early Italian immigrants wrote of the vastness and wealth of America's interior land mass. In 1889 it was an Italian, Achille Loria, who pointed to free, unoccupied land as a source of economic growth--a theory that by Frederick Jackson Turner's admission was to mold our own historical concept of the frontier.

Such was the promise of the American myth, and coupled with the entreaties of the "noble savage" frontier, America became as irresistible to the patrician Roman Mengarini as it had been to Francis Parkman. Romanticism, as could well have been anticipated, had diffused southward, following the channels of communication which had carried the Renaissance northward to France with Catherine de Medici and Francis I. But to Rousseau's sensuality and primitivism, Allesandro Manzoni, father of Italian Romanticism, had added an ardent Catholocism.[13] The spirit of Francis Xavier, of St. Thomas the Apostle, or Isaac Jogues epitomized the romantic idealism of the age.

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[11] Andrew Rolle, Immigrant Upraised, Italian Adventurers and Colonists in Expanding America (Norman, 1968), p. 20.

[12] This same point is dealt with at length by Luigi Barzini, The Italians (New York, 1964), pp. 106-21.

There was, however, another factor that may have persuaded Mengarini in his decision. With Napoleon's first onslaught, Italy had again known division. The Union of Upper Italy under Eugene Beauharnais and in the south under Joseph Bonaparte merely offered the traditionally subject Italian the ineluctable hope of union from Alps to sea.[14] The sacking of Italian treasures by Napoleon, the cynical manipulation of the Papacy, and the conditions of Campo Formio again served to further shame a proud people.

The carcass of Italy thus rendered at the abattoir of Vienna which had pledged itself to a return to the *status quo* resulted in despotism, pure and simple; for Italians to even think of politics was an act of high treason. As a result there grew within them either embittered cynicism or generous idealism.

At the embattled center of a fragmented Italy the restored papacy of Pius VII had sufficient dragoons, grenadiers and artillary to maintain tranquility.[15] In 1821 uprisings probably related to the nationalist-inspired Carbonari resulted in imprisonments. In 1823 more agitators for a united Italy were confined to the horrible prisons of the Papal States. Under Austrian influence the suppression did not relent with the accession of Leo XII. At the same time (around 1824) Giovanni Mazzini's Young Italy movement directed agitation in the Papal States, particularly the abortive uprising of February 1825.

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[13] Evelyn Cesanesco, *Liberation of Italy, 1815-1870* (London, 1895), p. 20.

[14] *Ibid*., p. 12.

Against this setting of frustrated idealism Gregory Mengarini pursued his studies, with the now restored Society of Jesus. Despite traditional Italian anticlericalism, summarized in the phrase, "Siamo sotto le unghi dei preti"[16] (we are under the talons of the priests), the scholastic saw within the Society, with its discipline and administration, another means of protesting the surrounding inequity. The emphasis placed by the Roman Catholic Church upon the corporal works of mercy, in other words the value of deeds in combination with a statement of faith, offered a valid avenue for zealous social renewal.

All of these or none of these factors may have contributed to the buoyancy evident in Mengarini's early correspondence. In an initial letter to Roothaan he praised the warm reception at Georgetown: "We find ourselves joyful in each occupation and happy as we have never been before."[17]

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[15] William H. Stillman, The Union of Italy (Cambridge, England, 1909), p. 12.

[16] Rolle, Immigrant Upraised, p. 24.

On April 24, 1841, Gregory Mengarini, citizen of one of the most ancient citadels of Christendom, set out from St. Louis and joined the first emigrant wagon train headed for California. His leader, the inspiring young Fleming who had spent the year before with the Potawatomi, noted: "Rev. Mr. Mengarini, recently from Tome, [was] specially selected by the Father General himself, for this mission because of his age, his virtues, his great facility for languages and his knowledge of medicine and music."[18]

De Smet's biographer added that Mengarini was "a man of tried virtue and gentle nature, a skillful physician, a musician of no mean order and a remarkable linguist."[19] He was skilled in folk medicine and herbalism and at the same time wrote for enthnographic and anthropological journals printed in America.

Mengarini's virtues, however, equaled his accomplishments. Although he admitted one of his shortcomings was his infrequent correspondence, his letters often underscore a genuine sense of charity.[20] In describing a battle between Blackfoot and Flatheads he noted: "Then the children who until then had demonstrated nothing but unconcern changed their indifference to tears which tore my heart, and I then did not see them but as poor little orphans exposed to all the fury of the enemies most cruel against children as against armed men."[21]

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[17] Mengarini to Roothaan, Georgetown, September 21, 1840, Mt. Sax., Vol. 1, Fol. II, p. 2, GASJ.

[18] Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XXVII, 193.

[19] Rolle, Immigrant Upraised, p. 187.

To balance the tenderness, Mengarini sported a buoyancy and optimism to be envied. Before leaving St. Louis, he wrote to Father General at the behest of De Smet, concluding:

> I do not know what trials that Lord has prepared for me. It is certain on many occasions I will be lacking, although a little common sense will help. . . . But I have a firm belief that God has called me and sent me to the ministry of his apostles so he will grant me to the last breath, for this is the very mission to which God has long been calling me in His subtle way.[22]

Explicitly embodied within the statement is an act of faith, an expression of evangelical zeal which was the raison d'etre for these lone expatriots. As Father Joseph Joset remarked: "Courage and patience are necessary to overcome the difficulties and bear the hardships inherent to their (mission) function."[23]

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[20] Mengarini to Roothaan, Columbia River, October 17, 1844, Mt. Sax., Vol. 11, Fol. VII, p. 9, GASJ.

[21] Mengarini to Roothaan, St. Mary's, June 30, 1848, Mt. Sax., Vol. 1, Fol. VII, p. 4, GASJ.

[22] Mengarini to Roothaan, St. Louis, April 24, 1841, Mt. Sax., Vol. 1, Fol. II, p. 7, GASJ.

It is for this reason that Mengarini noted enthusiastically that one-third of the Flatheads had mastered enough doctrine to be baptized on December 1, 1841. It is this dedication which prompted Mengarini to join the annual buffalo hunt in the spring of 1846. Only in light of his dedication to his spiritual ministry does the loss of his pack while fording a stream bear any meaning. Of this event he observed:

> Imagine my feelings when I found that the articles thus lost were my blanket and provisions, and all the necessaries for saying Mass. Somebody had conceived the idea of transferring my things to the back of this wild horse, and now I was left in a state of destitution. I knew nothing of the change, and now knew as little what to do. Should I go forward or go back? No blankets, no provisions, no Mass! Was it not a manifestation of God's will that I should not go on the expedition? But after all was not the accident rather the effect of carelessness than anything else? I settled these doubts by resolving to go ahead, and so I did.[24]

The commitment to conversion of the Flatheads is also evident in the reactions he imputed to them. In describing the ceremony on the Feast of Pentecost he observed: "All [Flatheads] kept a profound silence but still the radiance of joy on their faces revealed the richness in their hearts--the order of the love in their innocent souls."[25]

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[23] Joseph Joset Papers, Box LXXXVIII, Jesuit Archives, Gonzaga University.

[24] Mengarini, "Rocky Mountains," p. 144.

But let this not be a celestial montage of some misplaced seraphim. Mengarini was an Italian as was Boccaccio, with a talent for turning a humorous phrase on every page of his reports to the august Father General, as when in desperation he was forced to assign specific days for confession and communion, in order to conduct other missionary activities as well. His insistence on accompanying the buffalo hunters despite a sprained ankle he thus explained: "They insisted I return to the village but as I did not consider that the accident warranted a non-compliance with an order of obedience, I insisted on going ahead."[26]

In describing the decrepit condition of St. Ignatius mission, which he claimed was as poor as St. Mary's, he added that he was not sure whether the dogs or the pigs were responsible for rooting the foundations.[27] In discussing the inferior blue cloth used to replace the priest's cassocks, he ruefully observed: "If only Father General could see us now."[28] This is not unlike the philosophic humor he expressed when he discovered that visiting Indians had bent the pipes of the organ he had struggled to transport over the Rockies. His black curly head bent over the soundless keys, he said to De Smet: "There will be no music for Mass. We are indeed poor amidst great riches."[29]

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[25] Mengarini to Roothaan, St. Mary's, November 14, 1843, Mt. Sax., Vol. 1, Fol. II, p. 8, GASJ. The "Memorie" abound with such references.

[26] Mengarini here refers to one of the four vows taken by professed members of the Society. Partoll, "Mengarini's Narrative," p. 258.

[27] Mengarini to Roothaan, St. Mary's, September 30, 1847, Mt. Sax., Vol. 1, Fol. II, p. 2, GASJ.

But with the saving wit which carried Mengarini through snow, cold and bitterroot broth, was a constant humility. The Flatheads' phenomenal devotion to the sacrament of penance he attributed to the catechetical zeal of Ambrose Scilcalemla rather than to himself. He never hesitated to share the glory of his successful labor. Of one of his fellow missioners he wrote:

> Reverend Father De Vos remained at St. Mary's; he has wrought much good here, especially with the natives and the Canadians. I have never seen another man apply himself so diligently in learning another language as Father De Vos . . . he has stolen my dictionary and God knows when he will return it.[30]

Of Brother Claessens he observed: "He is indefatigable. He does not save himself and does the work for many." Mengarini continued, revealing his personal concern for each of his assistants: "But it seems that with time he is losing the use of his legs."[31]

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[28] Ibid., p. 3.

[29] Patricia Corley, Story of St. Mary's Mission (Helena, Montana, 1941), p. 17.

[30] Mengarini to Roothaan, Vancouver, September 26, 1844, [illegible citation], GASJ.

Despite differences over allocations of budgets, which sometimes included the purchase of extravagantly priced ducks and geese, Mengarini confessed his warm admiration for Father Michael Accolti as he pleaded with Roothaan that he not be removed from the Oregon missions:

> Father Accolti enjoyed a particular influence with the Protestants here. God gave him a particular quality difficult to find in others of winning in a few moments of conversation the hearts of his listeners, especially Americans who knew nothing about Catholicism. . . . Father Accolti had become a public figure beginning from the governor of Oregon (all Protestant) even to the workmen. It was only necessary that he would preach and the Church would be filled with Protestants.[32]

Furthermore, Mengarini never spared himself from labor, being among the first to raise the timbers for the mission church. In an effort to involve the men of the tribe in order to make it a community effort, Mengarini explained: "I began to preach from Genesis, 'You will earn your bread by the sweat of your brow.' They began then, at least the chiefs, to put their hands to work."[33]

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[31] Mengarini to Roothaan, St. Mary's, September 30, 1847, Mt. Sax., Vol. 1, Fol. I, p. 33, GASJ.

[32] Mengarini to Father General Peter Beckx, Champoeg, January 15, 1855, Mt. Sax., Vol. 2, Fol. I, p. 11, GASJ.

[33] Mengarini to Roothaan, Vancouver, September 26, 1844, [illegible citation], GASJ.

Diligence is again dramatically evident in Mengarini's discussion of a rather serious illness he suffered while the tribe was hunting in mid-December 1842. So weakened that he could no longer retain food, and perpetually as cold as ice, the young Jesuit after saying Mass, giving two instructions, and on Saturdays, hearing one hundred confessions, would huddle near the hearth making ornaments for the church. Despite his weakness, he used his resourceful imagination in creating an atmosphere of ecclesiastical ceremony to inspire his charges. For example, he described his handicraft:

> With two pieces of white muslim and two red handerkerchiefs I made a throne; with two gold leaves I covered a raggera of wood; and with some brass ornaments I made a monstrance which was fairly decent, candlebra and cornacopia in quantity as well, so that on Easter Sunday I could present a miniature spectacle of what had been presented at the Roman College during Forty Hours Devotion.[34]

Often far into the night, Mengarini labored at mastering yet another language. Master of flawless Italian and Latin, a fluent writer and conversationalist in Spanish and French, he now added the Salish language. Each biographical commentary notes that his efforts resulted in such that when Mengarini spoke none knew whether it be Flathead or European who spoke. Soon the young priest composed a basic grammar of the Salishan tongue. Even today it remains the standard reference for the cognate dialects.

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[34] Ibid.

It was by firelight, after his day among the faithful Flathead, that Mengarini began to work on the Salish dictionary. Only when the disheatened missioner left the territory for California did he bequeath his manuscripts to the young Jesuits who would eventually publish it on the press transported westward by Protestant missioners.[35]

Once having mastered this new tongue, Mengarini was eager to learn more about his comrades, adding:

> As my knowledge of Flathead increased, I was naturally curious to learn from our Indians the history, traditions and mythology of their tribe. I therefore gathered together some of the most respected among them and questioned them upon these matters: One answered my questions, and the others nodded their approval of his answers. _Of their past history they knew nothing_. [Italics added.] Nor is this to be wondered at, since the Indian is a being of the present day, caring nothing for what is past, and leaving the future to take care of itself, provided that he has plenty to eat today.[36]

This disposition toward linguistic and ethnographic research was also to lead Mengarini into a study of the Indians of Oregon, and in later years, a study of the vocabulary of the Santa Clara Indians.[37] In summary, Father Mengarini's contribution to philology includes his

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[35] Thwaites, _Early Western Travels_, XXVII, 193, _note_ 69.

[36] Mengarini, "Rocky Mountains," p. 34. The result of this research represents a significant portion of the "Memorie."

[37] See Preface, _note_ 9, _ante_, for a bibliographic summary of Mengarini's works.

Selish or Flathead Grammar, published in 1861 from the third manuscript copy, the first two laboriously hand written, lost by Indian carelessness or accident, his vocabularies of the cognate Salishan languages, and several other studies.

Life on the savage frontier where communications from family and even the Society arrived with good fortune but once every two years, demanded a combination of strong personality factors, each clearly evident in Gregory Mengarini, but often woefully absent among his colleagues. For example, the Little Faro uprising of 1847 revealed Mengarini's self-assurance, his sense of discipline, and his ultimate leadership of the tribe.

His volunteering to join the missionary party to the Blackfoot, the avowed enemies of the Flathead, and even more, the ritual killers of the plains, assures us that half a decade in the loneliness of the "Great Stonies" had not weakened Mengarini's missionary fervor a jot. In his letters he could not hide the fact that he was a man of cool and easy courage.[38]

Mengarini was no less courageous among the "savages," as he called them, than he was in coping with the inevitable bureaucracy of the Hudson's Bay Company, or the Society itself. He minced no words in bringing to the attention of the Father General the inequitable distribution of funds and supplies among the missions in the Oregon Country. He presented a painfully clear case illustrating the inefficiency of the Society's procurement system, and also presented facts and figures to prove the exorbitance of the Hudson's Bay Company prices as well as the indulgent extravagance of certain members of the Society.[39]

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[38] Mengarini to Roothaan, Vancouver, September 26, 1844, [illegible citation], GASJ.

Perhaps because of these impolitic assertions, or perhaps because of his unflinching insistence that the existing missions be properly staffed before any plans for expansion be considered, his profession was delayed.[40] Finally, on December 9, 1850, Gregory Mengarini was admitted to the professed of the Society, a rare and high honor for any Jesuit.

No doubt, Father Accolti's earlier letter to Father General Roothaan which contained an unrestrained appraisal of the young Roman's work contributed to his advance.

> Father Mengarini is the only outstanding missionary who does what is expected of him and in reality receives very little help and if abandoning the Indians would not result in an uprising, I would advance the proposition that he be professed. . . . While on this subject, Your Paternity, allow me to express my surprise that this forgotten missionary has not yet been advanced to profession in light of

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[39] Mengarini to Roothaan, St. Mary's, September 30, 1847, Mt. Sax., Vol. 1, Fol. I, p. 30, GASJ.

[40] Ibid.

> his zeal, his singular abilities with the Flathead language, as well as other talents which should be considered along with his seniority. Indeed, Mengarini exemplifies the qualities the Society associates with the rank of professed.[41]

Even after the heartbreaking end to his efforts at St. Mary's mission, Mengarini, the administrator, proved to be the salvation of the Oregon Mission. In 1853 he wrote to Rev. Francis Pellico in Rome: "I must have the wherewithal to buy provisions for the coming year, otherwise I will pay six per cent interest and we will again be dependent upon the Hudson's Bay Company."[42] Apparently, the plea was effective, for next year's report includes a thanks for the sum "sufficient to pay all three years' debts."[43]

Even when fairly well-established and involved in the affairs of Santa Clara College in California, Mengarini was ready to briskly criticize a plan to unite several of the Rocky Mountain tribes into one mission. His appraisal of the proposal was that it was "in fact impossible." Nor did he want for reasons, adding as he discussed the proponents of the plan that "it takes more than a few days to understand the state of the missions."[44]

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[41] Father Michael Accolti to Roothaan, Santa Clara, California, February 29, 1850, MS, GASJ. (Italics supplied.)

[42] Mengarini to Father [Francis] Pellico, Oregon City, November 20, 1853, Mt. Sax., Vol. 2, Fol. I, p. 4, GASJ.

[43] Mengarini to Beckx, Champoeg, January 15, 1855, [illegible citation], GASJ.

The incisive and frankly expressed logic, as well as native administrative ability, won the continued respect of the staff of the college. Despite his longing for the tribal lands and the entreaties of the delegation led by Chief Victor, he remained an effective teacher of languages, college administrator and scholar. Besides gathering a vocabulary of the local Santa Clara Indians, Mengarini managed the affairs of the sometimes near-insolvent institution in fluent French, English, Spanish and, of course, Italian. For example, on October 13, 1860, he wrote in unmistakably forceful Spanish to Father José M. Gonzalez Rubio, O.F.M., requesting that $900 be placed immediately in the hands of Father Anthony Maraschi, the agent for the college.[45]

At the same time, Mengarini held many responsible offices exclusively reserved for those Jesuits who are professed, or in other words, have taken the fourth vow of loyalty to the papacy. Included among his many duties, he served as Consultor missionis et domus and Patris Superioris.[46]

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[44] Mengarini to Beckx, Santa Clara, December 11, 1855, Mt. Sax., Vol. 2, Fol. II, p. 13, GASJ.

[45] Mengarini to Fr. Jose M. Gonzalez Rubio, O.F.M., Santa Clara, October 13, 1860, Santa Barbara Mission Archive Library.

Mengarini's financial acumen also took a predictable but unusual turn in the early 1880s. The financial uncertainties beginning with the Panic of 1873 had shaken popular confidence in such established banks as the Hibernia. Consequently, some like Miss Mary O'Mara asked "Father Magreena" to deposit all her savings with the "Colage Bank."[47] In response he wrote:

> Please take note that the Hibernia Bank has given only five and a quarter per cent dividend for the past six months, and all others lowered the rates of interest and several of them have closed for want of business.
>
> You asked me some time ago to take your money out of the bank and place it with the College, if you are satisfied that I may pay the same interest that the Hibernia will pay you, I'll take it; please answer and let me know your wishes.[48]

Miss O'Mara replied:

> December 30 [sic], 1881
>
> Rev. Father,
>
> I received your kind letter About the money it is my wish if you please take it out and put it in the Collage I am sorry to put you to so much troubel but i shall feel very gald to have it All together And if you please to write and let me know how much ther is in All i wish you A happy

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[46] "Mission in California," Catalagus Sociorum et Officiorum Provinciae Taurinensis Dispersae Societatis Jesu (Massiliae, 1863), p. 14; (Massiliae, 1864), p. 16; (Turin, 1886), p. 14.

[47] Mary O'Mara to Mengarini, Lowell, Mass., July 27, 1880, MS, Archives, University of Santa Clara.

[48] Mengarini to Mary O'Mara, Santa Clara, January 7, 1881. Ibid.

New year And All the Fathers in the Collage And i pray that god protect ye All And the Collage.

No more at present from your humble servant.
Mary O'Mara '54
Dutton st. lowell. Mass.[49]

Amidst such varied enterprises time crept on unnoticed, and time turned years into decades. Finally in 1881, jovial Gregory Mengarini suffered the first stroke of apoplexy, partially paralyzing his tongue, and thus causing him to limit his responsibilities. Soon failing eyesight forced him to surrender the reading of the Divine Office and the celebration of the Mass.

On September 23, 1886, Mengarini rose as usual and pleasantly pursued his ritual, as he visited the garden and vineyard. But at noon he was not in the refectory; instead he lay on the floor of his room. Though his pulse was still beating, a third stroke had done its work.[50]

The Last Rites of the Church were administered to this man of two worlds who had crossed the Atlantic to join the vanguard of missioners into the Rockies--to teach, to preach, to practice the works of mercy. History was to judge how well he had labored for the "greater glory of God."

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[49] Although the letter is dated December 30, 1881, the contents suggesting a response to Mengarini's letter of January 7, 1881, as well as containing a New Year's greeting, would suggest that an error had been made. O'Mara to Mengarini, Lowell, Mass., December 30 [January 31], 1881. Ibid.

[50] "A Career Ended," San Francisco Morning Call, September 25, 1886, p. 6, col. 2; Vita Functi in Societati Iesu, 7 Augusti 1814-7 Augusti 1914 (Paris, 1897), p. 71; Vita Functi Provinciae Oregensis (Portland, 1960), p. 17.

CHAPTER VI

A NEW ARCADIA

Scattered throughout the Northwest and Montana, particularly, are many sites rich in historic interest. The landing at Fort Benton speaks of the invasion of commerce. The Custer monument tells its simple story of brilliant military daring and bravery. The white shaft that overlooks the Ruby Valley in the Big Hole Basin recalls bloodshed and warfare. The crumbling houses of Bannack, of Montana City, and of Beartown speak of the rush for treasure, as do the high-heaped piles of gravel in Alder Gulch and Last Chance tell of successful gold seeking.

In this same region extending from the Yellowstone National Park along what is now the boundary line between Montana and Idaho is a long range of mountains broadly sweeping from west to north from the United States into Canada. Beyond the 46° latitude to Cordillerean upsurge it is known not as the Rockies but as the Bitter Root Range.[1] At the base of this range lies another historic first in Montana's past. The long-sought Black Robes finally reached the devoted Flatheads in these tribal lands lying in the extreme western portion of Montana between the Continental Divide on the east and the Bitter Root Range on the west. In the basin drained by the Clark's Fork of the Columbia between the present town of Stevensville and the ruins of old Fort Owen, St. Mary's mission was established.[2]

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[1] Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, II, 731.

Since it was already September when the company of missionaries arrived, it was important to choose a site for a reduction where at least temporary shelters could be erected. The valley, protected from the Blackfoot on the south by a chain of mountains, was sheltered from the north by another range on whose slopes grew the timber needed for construction. "Between these two ranges ran the river the Flatheads called the Bitterroot."[3] Since most of the significant events of the long trip had occurred on some Feast of the Blessed Virgin, the mission was to be called St. Mary's.[4] Father Nicolas Point was immediately commissioned to apply his artistic talent in drawing up a plan for residence for the missionaries, a church and utility building.[5]

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[2] "Montana's First White Settlement at Stevensville by Missionaries in 1841," Stevensville (Montana) Register, December 23, 1909, p. 1, col. 2.

According to Mr. Donald C. Taylor, Assistant Professor of Anthropology in Montana State University, "the original mission was located approximately a mile, perhaps a little less, in a southwesterly direction from the site of Fort Owen." B. C. Payette, comp., Captain John Mullan: His Life: Building the Mullan Road: As It Is Today and Interesting Tales of Occurrences Along the Road (Montreal, 1968), p. 319.

[3] Point, Wilderness Kingdom, p. 30.

[4] Point includes in his narrative the account of the vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary beheld by a young girl at the exact future site of the mission. Ibid., p. 42.

Finally, the mission to the Flathead had been inaugurated. The fathers were no less impressed with these Indians than had been earlier visitors. Though the leader of the welcoming delegation, Oulstilpo had claimed: "I am only an evil and ignorant man." De Smet reserved his highest praise for them.

> They [the Flatheads] little resemble the majority of the Indians, who are, generally speaking, uncouth, importunate, improvident, insolent, stubborn and cruel. The Flatheads are disinterested, generous, devoted to their brethren and friends; irreproachable, and even exemplary, as regards probity and morality. Among them, dissensions, quarrels, injuries and enmities are unknown.[6]

There appears in historical annals to be common agreement regarding the fact that the Flatheads were considered superior Indians by allies, enemies and visitors as well. Traders were very much impressed with their character and integrity as compared to other Indians, extravagantly praising them for friendliness, honesty, frankness, truthfulness, courage, cleanliness, obedience to their chiefs and the chastity of their women.[7]

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[5] This may be the town plan Mengarini refers to at the conclusion of the "Memorie." Most likely, it was similar to that which Point drew for the Coeur d'Alene Mission. To this date no trace of the St. Mary's mission plan has been found. The reasons may be as Father Joset reported, that after the closing of the mission, several packages of records and documents were lost while fording one of the rivers which were crossed.

[6] Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XXV, 287.

In fact, praise of the Flathead seems to be universal.

> All traders, perhaps, had favorite tribes; but almost without exception the men who had experience in the far West developed a respect, sometimes a fondness, for some of the Rocky Mountain people. This attitude centered upon the Nez Perce and Flatheads, especially the latter. All that was good about Indian society seemed embodied in these tribes. Their kindness, generosity, and reverence impressed many traders. Peter Skene Ogden, a man of devastating realism, chose the Flatheads as his favorites.[8]

Not only were the Flatheads admired, but they were defended from detractors as well. When a captivity narrative of dubious authenticity described bondage, torture, and indignities at the hands of the Flatheads, William H. Ashley wrote an indignant letter to the editor of a St. Louis newspaper, operating on "a desire to do justice to those who have it now in their power to vindicate themselves." This fur-trade pioneer challenged the integrity of the author and went on to offer a generous and heartwarming character reference for the Flatheads.[9]

A description of the Flatheads by Major Peter Ronan, penned shortly after Father Mengarini launched St. Mary's mission, is worthy of note:

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[7] Bernard De Voto, Across the Wide Missouri (Boston, 1943), p. 10.

[8] Lewis O. Saum, The Fur Trader and the Indian (London and Seattle, 1965), p. 57.

[9] Ibid.

> Both sexes were described as comparatively very fair, and their complexions a shade lighter than the palest new copper after being freshly rubbed. They are remarkably well made, rather slender and very seldom corpulent. The dress of the men in those days consisted solely of long leggings, which reached from the ankles to the hips, and were fastened by strings to a leathern belt around the waist, and a shirt of dressed deer skin with loose hanging sleeves, which fell down to their knees. The outside seams of the leggings and shirt sleeves had fringes of leather. The women were covered by a loose robe of the same material reaching from the neck to the feet, and ornamented with fringes, beads, hawk-bills, and thimbles. The dresses of both were regularly cleaned with pipe clay, which abounds in parts of the country. They had no permanent covering for the head, but in wet or stormy weather sheltered it by part of a buffalo robe, which completely answered all purposes of a surtout.[10]

One of the most talented to portray the tribe observed: "And it must be admitted that in the eyes of the vain man the costume of an Indian riding through camp at a full gallop is not without its charm."[11]

After the closing of the mission in 1850, Lieutenant John Mullan recorded similar admiration for the Flatheads.

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[10] Major Peter Ronan, Historical Sketch of the Flathead Indian Nation from the Year 1813 to 1890 (Helena, Montana, 1890), p. 9.

[11] Fortunately an enviable gallery of Flathead portraits and genre studies were painted by Nicolas Point, S.J., who was among those who established the mission among the Flatheads in 1841. In the 1850's Gustavus Sohon, an interpreter for Lt. John Mullan while exploring the Bitterroot Valley, sketched not only the landscape but made nine pencil portraits of prominent Flathead leaders. These latter were presented to the U.S. National Museum in 1883. John C. Ewers, Gustavus Sohon (Washington, 1948), p. 12.

Equal esteem was expressed in a report made by Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens to President Franklin Pierce which the president then included in his annual message to Congress: "They [the Flatheads] are the best Indians of the Territory, honest, brave and docile."[12]

As for the physical disfiguration which the name Flathead implies, there is no evidence in historic time to justify it, although neighboring tribes traditionally believe that when the Flatheads first arrived from the lower Columbia, they practiced the head shaping or deforming typical among the latter tribes. The explanation offered by contemporary Flatheads is that in sign language the symbol for the tribe is often interpreted as "pressed side of head" or "pressed head," hence Flathead.

Although insulated by mountain barriers, the cultural differentiation between Plateau and Plain was not distinct. In fact, the Flatheads were involved in a cultural revolution during the very period when the white man arrived. Spanish horses, transmitted by means of Apache raiders to Shoshone traders, reached the interior by 1725.[13] Attendant upon this was greater mobility, extended contact, efficiency in war and greater assurance of a food supply. With this contact came a rapid assimilation of the war complex more characteristic of the Plains culture. The tipi, tailored buckskin clothing, and such rituals as the exultant scalp dance were also transmitted as a result of migration and intermarriage. But often the acquired trait existed as an overlay. For example, tribal structure was evident in times of warfare, but village organization reemerged during peacetime. Consequently, "the spirit was less that of a divided tribe than an agglomeration of villages upward to form a tribe."[14]

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[12] Burns, The Jesuit and the Indian, Wars of the Northwest, p. 8.

[13] Evidence of Flathead participation in the horse complex is found in the Journals of Lewis and Clark. "The Indians were mounted on very fine horses of which the Flatheads had a great abundance; that is, each man in the nation possesses from twenty to a hundred head." Bernard DeVoto, ed., Journals of Lewis and Clark (Boston, 1953), p. 236.

Such loose organization of village life led to a nomadic life based upon economic considerations and resulted in regular seasonal migrations, which presented one of the greatest obstacles to the Jesuits. In spring and summer the Flathead resided in the Bitterroot Valley, living on camas roots, berries and small game. In June and July the men crossed the mountains for a brief hunt to obtain meat and hides. Again, after the end of the berry season in September and October, the entire tribe would move to the plains near the upper tributaries of the Missouri River, returning to dig bitterroot in March or April. Thus the Flatheads were involved in a long winter hunt for fully half a year.[15]

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[14] Burns, The Jesuit and Indian Wars, pp. 10-11.

Although the neighboring Kutenai, Pend d'Oreille and Shoshone recognized the territorial rights of the Flathead on the plains during the migratory buffalo hunts, the Blackfoot pushing southwestward from Alberta toward the Rockies and the northern tributaries of the northern Missouri presented a formidable obstacle. Armed with guns and a ready supply of shot and powder obtained from white traders along the Saskatchewan and mounted on swift horses, they attacked the Shoshones, Flatheads and Kutenais, who were armed only with primitive bows, arrows and lances.

> By the end of the century the Blackfeet had become masters of the northwestern plains from North Saskatchewan River southward to the northern tributaries of the Missouri and from Battle River eastward to the Rockies . . . years later a middle-aged Flathead recalled the hectic days of his youth when his courageous people unable to defend themselves against repeated attacks by the better armed Blackfeet decided to leave the plains to find peace behind the Rocky Mountain barrier.[16]

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[15] Point discusses the buffalo hunt as an eyewitness with an eye for detail. Turney-High, however, brings to the discussion certain anthropological perceptions. The routine of hunting and root gathering is also outlined by Carling Malouf, "Economy and Land Use by the Indians of Western Montana" (Missoula, 1952), mimeographed, unpaged.

[16] John C. Ewers, The Blackfeet, Raiders on the Northwestern Plains (Norman, 1958), pp. 30-52. Also consult Lewis H. Morgan, "Indian Migrations," The Indian Miscellany, ed. by William W. Beach (Albany, 1877); Oscar Lewis, "The Effects of White Contact Upon Blackfoot Culture with Special Reference to the Role of the Fur Trade," Monographs of the American Ethnological Society, VI (New York, 1942), pp. 1-73.

In the face of this threat, western tribes banded together to form large scale hunting expeditions on the plains. They also began to seek new rituals to protect them.

In the 1840s the Flathead confederacy, which made annual excursions to the buffalo plains east of the mountains and traded buffalo products for supplies, comprised the Flathead or Salish, the Kalispell and the Kootenai. At that time the Salish numbered about four hundred and fifty, six hundred Kalispells, and three hundred and fifty Kootenai.[17]

By the first decade of the nineteenth century, Crow Indians began obtaining large numbers of guns at the Mandan and Hidatsa villages on the Missouri and began trading them with the Shoshones and Flatheads.[18] By 1808 and 1809 the Flatheads were securing guns through direct exchange with Canadian traders after David Thompson and Finan McDonald had built Nor'wester Fur Company trading posts near them. By 1810 the Flatheads with twenty guns supplied by traders had successfully dealt with their enemies, killing sixteen Piegans who had formerly referred to the Shoshones and by implication, their allies, the Flatheads, as "miserable old women whom they could kill with sticks and stones."[19]

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[17] Albert J. Partoll, "Fort Connah: A Frontier Trading Post," Pacific Northwest Quarterly, XXX (October, 1939), 401.

[18] The Crows also served as middlemen in transmitting articles of European manufacture, such as brass kettles, which the western tribesmen cut into small pieces to ornament their hair and clothing. Francois Laroque, Journal of Laroque from the Assiniboine to the Yellowstone 1805 (Ottawa, 1905), pp. 71-72.

The Flatheads were now in a position to retaliate against Blackfoot harassment and horse theft as well as being prepared to insist upon their prior right to hunt the buffalo on the plains. Though they traveled in large bands and cautiously moved south, they still suffered heavy losses.[20] Despite an offer made by Ross Cox to negotiate a peace between the warring factions, the bloody conflict continued through the mid-nineteenth century and even finally contributed to the closing of Mengarini's mission at St. Mary's in 1850.[21]

While the Blackfoot waged intermittent war, the Flathead cultivated friendly relations with both American and British fur traders. In return for peltries the Salish acquired practical objects as well as luxuries, blue cloth, and beads which were as desirable as utensils, tools and gunpowder. It was as a result of this fur trade activity that a group of Iroquois probably trained at the Jesuit mission of Caughnawaga, settled and intermarried with them in the first half of the century.[22]

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[19] Ewers, The Blackfeet, p. 30.

[20] Ibid., p. 125.

[21] Information regarding the Flatheads on government reservation land at Jocko, Montana, is provided by Charles C. Wroght, "General Information About the Flathead Indian Reservation in Western Montana," published by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior (Washington, D.C., 1954). Because of the diminishing number of full-blooded Flatheads, few specialized studies have been conducted since. An analysis of the tribal depletion is provided by Alan P. Merriam, Ethnomusicology of the Flathead Indians (Chicago, 1967), pp. 348-49.

As Mengarini explained in the "Memorie," the Iroquois, particularly Ignace La Mouse, introduced certain elements of Catholic worship into the primitive ceremonials which Captain Benjamin L. Bonneville noted in the early 1830s.[23] They observed, as well, the cardinal holidays of the Roman Catholic Church. Sunday was considered a day of rest which also included religious instruction interspersed with singing and dancing. The remainder of the day the Flatheads indulged in their love of gambling, wagering with fervor on horse races and playing the "hand game."

It was these Iroquois who had encouraged the organization of a series of deputations to St. Louis in the 1830s in search of a "Black Robe." It was in answer to this request that De Smet and his band of Jesuit priests and lay brothers set out from Westport, Missouri, in 1841 to attempt to establish in the uncharted Indian territory of the North American continent, centers for religious and socio-economic training similar to those they had successfully developed in South America.

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[22] There is much debate as to whether these were members of the original group who worked for David Thompson or others who having been told of the region by their predecessors, also ventured into the Bitterroot Valley.

[23] Washington Irving, The Adventures of Captain Bonneville, U.S.A., ed. by Edgely W. Todd (Norman, Okla., 1964), p. 116.

Unfortunately, the records and diaries of early St. Mary's have never been located. Quite possibly they were lost after the closing of the mission in 1850, for Father Ravalli writes that two-thirds of what was carried away from the mission was lost in the waters, presumably while fording rivers.[24] Consequently, the events following De Smet's encounter with the principal chief of the Flathead tribe, Tjolzhitsay or Big Face, must be drawn from unofficial accounts. From the Nicolas Point narrative, we learn of the illness of their official interpreter and the sudden destructive hurricane which threatened to demolish the temporary buildings on December 3, the day before the Feast of St. Francis Xavier when two hundred and two catechumens were to be baptized.[25]

Mengarini's "Narrative of the Rockies" offers an even more detailed litany of those initial vicissitudes.

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[24] Schoenberg, "Memorandum Regarding St. Mary's Existing Log Church," MS, Jesuit Archives, Gonzaga University.

[25] Point, Wilderness Kingdom, p. 42.

> We soon set to work to erect a log cabin and a church, and built around them a sort of fort protected by bastions. The earth was already frozen and the trench for the foundations had to be cut with axes. Trees had to be felled and trimmed in the neighboring forest, and hauled to the place destined for the buildings. The Indians were not inclined to lend a helping hand, and we needed their assistance. "Example is better than precept," thought I, and seizing an axe, I began to work. Some half-breeds would have deterred me by telling me that thus I would lose authority with the Indians. I let my advisers talk and worked away. Soon a chief, throwing down his buffalo-robe, stepped forward, asked for an axe and joined me in my labor. The young men hastened to follow him, and our house progressed beyond expectation.[26]

But in his reminiscences, also appearing in The Woodstock Letters, the witty Roman ruefully adds that one should not sneer at this first building, although the cracks between the interlacing logs were filled with clay, and "the partitions between the rooms were of deer-skin." Furthermore, he adds that "the roof of saplings was covered with straw and earth. The windows were 2x1, and deer-skin with the hair scraped off supplied the place of glass."[27]

In a few weeks' time, the log chapel was completed. The primitive structure had no floor, no pews. Nevertheless, a Solemn Mass of dedication was offered in the new shrine on the first Sunday in October--The Feast of Our Lady of The Holy Rosary. Resplendent in gaily beaded costumes, the proud members of the congregation sat in semi-circles on the bare ground facing the altar. A fire smoldering on the dirt floor, with smoke escaping upward, teepee-fashion through a hole in the roof, dispelled the chill of the autumn morning which witnessed the formal opening of the Mission of St. Mary's in the Flathead country.

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[26] Partoll, "Mengarini's Narrative," p. 197.

[27] Mengarini, "Rocky Mountains," pp. 306-07.

The progress made by the Flatheads under the direction of Fathers Point and Mengarini impressed De Smet upon his return from Fort Colville in late fall. He wrote to General Roothaan that the "plan" had been "carried into execution."[28]

The plan was similar to that developed by the Society in Paraguay. De Smet referred to his missions as "reductions," a term borrowed from the South American system in which nomadic neophytes were taught also to be farmers and artisans. According to De Smet, the field west of the Rocky Mountains suggested to him many similarities with those among the native races of South America. In both the main obstacle to conversion had been the example and blatant vice of the whites. Consequently, De Smet expressly stated that he made at Vade Mecum (a personal translation) of the Narrative of Muratori, the historian of the Paraguay missions.[29]

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[28] De Smet to Roothaan, St. Mary's, December 30, 1841, cited in Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 330.

[29] O'Hara, "De Smet in Oregon," pp. 247-48.

In essence the application of the principles of the reductions by the Society in the Oregon Territory was:

> Law, government, family, all is modeled upon and conforms to the principles of true Christian civilization and to the directions given to this new Reduction by the missionaries. Guiding and inspiring us are the impressive accomplishments of the famous missions of Paraguay, described in great detail in Muratori's, Il Christianismo Felice.[30]

De Smet described the system as consisting of four steps: (1) the nurturing of a simple, firm faith; (2) a respect for authority; (3) industry and a love of labor; (4) flight from all contaminating influences or from what the Gospel calls the world.[31]

Jesuit procedures in their Montana reductions more or less followed this pattern. A site for a mission was carefully selected and developed. The rudiments of a basically agricultural economy were imparted to the Indians, partly for the obvious purpose of civilizing them, and partly to bring them within the range of the missionaries for spiritual guidance. From this mission center, then, the Jesuits radiated outward, like spokes in a wheel, into numberless valleys and plateaus. In this way eight distinct centers were established and from these the Jesuits worked, covering most of the state well before the end of the nineteenth century.

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[30] Giovanni Muratori, Il Christiansimo Felice, cited in Missone Della Provincia Torinese Della Compagnie di Gesu, p. 5.

[31] Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 328-29.

Their efforts in this project are described even more graphically in the following passage:

> The Jesuit Fathers then set out two and two, like the disciples of our Lord, with little more than a staff and a prayer-book, accompanied by some of the native Indians who had been already converted and who were to act as interpreters; and by these simple means they attempted the execution of this vast enterprise. They began by pointing out to the savages the numerous inconveniences in their present mode of life, whether they considered the precarious nature of their maintenance, the discomfort of their dwelling-houses, or their defenseless condition in the frequent wars in which they were engaged; and they invited them to come and live together in some settled spot, to build houses, and to cultivate the ground.[32]

Thus, when De Smet, having left October 28, returned on December 8, 1841, with provisions and farm implements purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Colville three hundred miles away, he could report:

> The Flatheads, assisting us with their whole heart and strength, had, in a short time, cut from two to three thousand stakes; and the three brothers, with no other tools than the axe, saw and auger, constructed a chapel with pediment, colonade and gallery, balustrade, choir, seats, &c. by St. Martin's day; when they assembled in the little chapel all the catechumens, and continued the instructions which were to end on the third of December, the day fixed for their baptism.[33]

The Indians valued the chickens, hogs and cows De Smet had returned with, but the seeds he brought from Fort Colville which consisted of a few bushels of oats, wheat and potatoes caused consternation among the Indians. As planting season arrived they watched the sowing and planting with curiousity and criticism. They thought it very foolish for the Fathers to tear up the soil and grass for their ponies and then bury in the ground that which seemed good to eat. They could not believe that under the soil the seed would reproduce itself, despite the reassurrances of Brother William Claessens. They would, therefore, spend hour after hour, day after day perched on the fence awaiting the first shoots which represented the first agricultural experiment in Montana.[34]

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[32] Schoenberg, Jesuits in Montana, p. 6.

[33] Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XXVII, 310.

"Thus did the material and the spiritual temple of the Divine Master progress among them," wrote Mengarini.[35] But he hastens to add that polygamy and the magic sumesch cult continued. Yet De Smet wrote by Christmas: "The Flathead nation had been converted--four hundred Kalispels baptized, eighty Nez-Perce, several Coeurs d'Aliene, many Kooetanays, Blackfeet, Snakes and Bannacs." Six to seven hundred new Christians crowded into the small chapel decorated with rushes to celebrate the Solemn Mass of

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[34] Palladino, Indian and White in the Northwest, pp. 37-8; William P. Donnelly, "Nineteenth Century Jesuit Reductions in the United States," Mid-America, XVII (January, 1935), 75; Helen C. Clark, "Black Robes Taught Farming," Great Falls (Montana) Tribune, July 28, 1968, p. 23.

[35] Mengarini, "Rocky Mountains," p. 308.

Thanksgiving with Father De Smet.

Faithful to their promise, the Indians had returned from the hunt before the beginning of winter. With them they brought seventy bales of dried meat for the Jesuits, nearly three tons to be eaten with grease and berries, or berries and grease![36]

On December 3, the feast of St. Francis Xavier, Father Mengarini, despite his indisposition, gathered the two hundred catechumens in the solemn candlelight of the log chapel, covered with mats of rushes and festoons of green on the walls and ceiling. The thirteen who were considered qualified to serve as sponsors, as well as the Great Chief Paul, a nonegenarian, who had been baptized two years before, witnessed the entire interrogation, which, "except for the time taken for dinner . . . lasted from six o'clock in the morning until nine o'clock at night."[37] Perhaps the eager acceptance of this new doctrine rests upon the fact that the miraculous and inexplicable, so much a part of Catholicism, adapted itself easily to the Flathead vision quest concept.[38]

An organized system of instruction patterned on that used by the Brothers of the Christian Doctrine in Rome was followed. Catholic doctrine was summarized in several hundred questions and answers to be committed to memory. During the daily hour of instruction, interspersed with song, tickets of approbation were given to those who answered correctly. The tickets served to indicate attendance, express approval, and since indicating a measure of mastery, prompted parents to urge improvement in the children. The device thus involved the entire community.

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[36] Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XXVII, 319.

[37] Point, Wilderness Kingdom, p. 42.

[38] Merriam, Ethnomusicology of the Flathead Indians, p. 136.

The method of instruction was to reduce the Catechism to question and answer forms.

> These were committed to memory by the neophytes and on appointed dates 'catechism bees' were held in the church, one contestant asking the question of another. Failure to answer naturally disqualified one from sharing the prizes. These contests were limited to children under thirteen, for in the children lay the future greatness of the mission.[39]

Another favored device employed with success by the missionaries was to assign one phrase of a prayer to each group of children. Then placing each child in the proper position, the whole of the prayer was recited, phrase by phrase, until the entire group knew the prayer as a unit.[40]

Father Mengarini and Father Point may also have utilized the "Catholic Ladder" or the "Sah-kah-lee Stick," purportedly developed by Father Norbert Blanchet during his evangelization of the Indians of the Pacific Northwest.

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[39] Bischoff, Jesuits in Old Oregon, p. 31.

[40] Donnelly, "Jesuit Reductions," p. 76.

On the long stick were cut forty short parallel lines or notches giving the appearance of a ladder. Each line or notch represented a century, and the whole forty represented the traditional 4,000 years of the world's history prior to the advent of Christ. These lines were followed by thirty-three points or dots and three crosses to show the years of Christ's life and the manner of his death. A church and twelve perpendicular marks denoted the beginnings of the Church at the death of Christ, through the twelve apostles. Eighteen further horizontal lines or marks (each a century) and thirty-nine points (each a year) indicated the lapse of time since the death of Christ.[41]

Of course, the religious life of the community also included the adults. Mengarini hastened to add:

> When the Angelus rings, the Indians rise from sleep; half an hour after the morning prayers are said in common; all assist at Mass and at the instruction. A second instruction is given in evening at sunset and lasts about an hour and a quarter, . . . One of the Fathers each morning visits the sick, to furnish them with medicines, and give them such assistance as their wants may require.[42]

Father Point wrote upon returning from the winter hunt, to what was now an enclosed farm and village, that he joined the other priests in preparing the Indians for the reception of the sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion in order that they make their Easter duty. Point goes on to say: "Pentecost Sunday of 1842 was the most beautiful day that had ever shone on the village of St. Mary's for on this day its elite received for the first time the Bread of Angels."[43]

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[41] Charles M. Buchanan, "The Catholic Ladder," The Indian Sentinel, VII (January, 1918), 22. Point portrays this device in a sketch reproduced in Wilderness Kingdom, p. 85. Another device developed by Father Francis Blanchet in 1839 was a carved wooden timeline called the "Jesus Stick."

[42] Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 336.

In summarizing the effect of the first year's missionary activities, De Smet observed that in addition to the baptisms at which he officiated in the spring of 1842, and "with 500 baptized last year, in different parts of the country, mostly among the Flatheads and Kalispels, and 196 that I baptized on Christmas day, at St. Mary's, with the 350 baptized by Rev. Fathers Mengarini and Point, make a total of 1654 souls, wrested from the power of the devil."[44]

"At the first tolling of the bell, they ran with great speed to the church," Mengarini observed, "as a band of famished to an oven of baking bread."[45] The religious fervor of the Flathead is also frequently attested to by Father De Smet, who wrote: "The Flatheads are fond of praying. After the regular evening prayer, they will assemble in their tents to pray or sing canticles. These pious exercises will frequently be prolonged till a late hour; and if any wake during the night, they begin to pray." On Sundays, the exercises of devotion were longer and more numerous, and yet the Indians were never fatigued with the pious duty. They felt that the happiness of the little and the humble was to speak with their Heavenly Father, and according to De Smet, "no house presented so many attractions as did the house of the Lord."[46]

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[43] Point, Wilderness Kingdom, p. 46. It is worthy of note that Point accompanied three of the seasonal buffalo hunts during his brief stay: December 29, 1841 to April, 1842; January to April 1844 and July 1846.

[44] Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XXVII, 381-82.

[45] Mengarini to Roothaan, March 10, 1842, MS, Jesuit Archives, Gonzaga University.

Admittedly, the chronicle of the Flatheads' musical education was somewhat less impressive, but no less a tribute to Mengarini's ardor, as well as his sense of humor. Soon he had translated several canticles into the Flathead tongue, the music for two he had composed himself. As time passed, the young priest organized a band.

> . . . a conglomerate affair. . . . We had a flute, two accordians, a tambourine, piccolo, cymbals, and a bass drum. And we played according to notes; for Indians have excellent eyes and ears; and our band, if weak

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[46] This possible tendency on the part of the missionaries to idealize the behavior of their Indian disciples is revealed in an episode Father De Smet related much later to Thurlow Weed. He then admitted that he and his Indians had discovered gold in the Black Hills, but not until years after did his Indian friends admit that the gold they had discovered had been found on a man they had murdered. "Letter from John Maguire," Daily Territorial Enterprise (Virginia City, Nevada), June 22, 1875, quoted in Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana, VIII (1917), 152.

> in numbers, was certainly strong in lungs; such as wind instruments spared neither contortions of face nor exerting of their organs to give volume to their music.[47]

But vicissitudes beset the project. An organ that Mengarini had painstakingly transported from St. Louis was rendered useless by a group of Nez Perce who had come to view the Catholic ceremonies from the choir gallery of the church. As they observed, they rested their arms on what seemed to be a table. But under the oil cloth cover lay the organ pipes unwittingly crushed and useless when it was time for vespers.[48]

As a result of their enthusiasm for non-Indian music, Mengarini began teaching music to several youngsters and the ablest of the catechumens in 1843. From this group, he formed a military band consisting of two clarinets, two accordians, three ottoviani and three flutes. By Easter the group was ready to perform in Church. In the annual report to the Father General, Mengarini suggested that "it would be appreciated if he would send some military instruments, some trombones, tympanies, etc., etc. with the orchestration for each instrument, and several pieces of music composed for this type of group. It is incredible how the savages like music."[49]

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[47] Partoll, "Mengarini's Narrative," p. 200.

[48] Mengarini, "Rocky Mountains," p. 34.

[49] Mengarini to Roothaan, Vancouver, September 26, 1844, Mt. Sax., (illegible citation), GASJ.

At Christmas 1845, the midpoint of the missionaries' sojourn at St. Mary's, De Smet's glowing description includes the fact that "twelve young Indians, taught by Father Mengarini, performed with accuracy several pieces of music during the midnight Mass."[50]

With the few hours left in the day, Mengarini applied the particular liguistic talents for which he had been singled out for missionary work. In addition to translating songs, the young priest set about translating the catechism into the Flathead tongue. Often far into the night he would rewrite the notes he had gathered during the day, thus mastering the language and gradually compiling A Salish or Flathead Grammar. Rudimentary Salish vocabulary now transcribed for the first time formed the most important part of the later Dictionary of the Kalispel or Flathead Indian Language. He began to work on it in 1846. When he departed for California in 1852, he left the manuscript behind for the use of other missionaries.[51]

As his knowledge of the language increased, Mengarini sought out the older Indians, for as he explains, he was curious to learn from the Indians the history, traditions and mythology of their tribe. "Of their past history they knew nothing," but they would at least nod acquiscence to his questions.[52]

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[50] Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XXIX, 300.

[51] Joseph Giorda, Joseph Bandini, and Gregory Mengarini, A Dictionary of the Kalispel and Flathead Indian Languages (Helena, Montana, 1877-1879).

In 1846 Mengarini broadened his scope of Indian lore when he, along with the village factotem, Peter Biledot, accompanied thirty Flatheads and forty Pend d'Oreilles on one of their semi-annual hunts. Despite the fact that he doubted the efficacy of his presence, he confessed that he felt moved to join in at least one expedition.

Although the Indians of the Interior Plateau generally subsisted on smaller mammals and trapped others including weasels and porcupines for ornamental purposes, the buffalo hunt held symbolic importance.[53] The greatest part of the Flatheads' sustenance came from hunting the sheep, goat, elk and deer indigenous to their own area. But the horse had made feasible the pursuit of the bison to the Lower Musselshell and the Big Horn, and as far south as Fort Hall.[54]

By 1846 the elders knew the buffalo herds were declining. In fact, one old Iroquois hunter at Fort Colville reminisced in 1854 that the last bull had been killed twenty-five years before.[55] Yet even today the residents of the Jocko Valley Flathead Reservation organize a summer bison hunt, perhaps to recapture its once symbolic value.[56]

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[52] Mengarini, "Rocky Mountains," p. 34.

[53] George Weisel, "Ten Animal Myths of the Flathead Indians," Journal of the Washington Academy of Sciences, XLII (1952), 350.

[54] Additional information on hunting patterns can be found in Teit, "The Salishan Tribes," pp. 344-48; Turney-High, Flathead Indians of Montana, pp. 112-23, and Ewers, Gustavus Sohon, p. 14.

The fact remained that buffalo hides were eminently tradeable items. The sale of 67,000 buffalo robes to the American Fur Company in 1840, rose to 110,000 in 1848. In that same year, St. Louis traders purchased 25,000 buffalo tongues for gourmets around the world.[57] Furthermore, the construction of a single Indian lodge required between fifteen and twenty hides. Within the lodge buffalo meat was used for eating, the bones used as implements, the hair for decoration, the muscle for whips and bows, and the hide for endless items including kettles, boats, saddles and halters, shields, clothes and bed coverings.

With the advent of the horse in the early 1700s, entire villages became involved in this massive economic enterprise. Once in motion, the hunting caravan offered an impressive array. As Point wrote:

> Since these hunts were long affairs, the hunters took with them everything they possessed. Each wigwam

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[55] George Gibbs, Report of Explorations and Surveys to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean (12 vols.; Washington, D.C., 1855-1860), I, 263.

[56] Verne Ray, "Cultural Element Distribution," Plateau, XXII (1942), 119; and Cultural Relations in the Plateau of Northwestern America (Los Angeles, 1939), p. 145.

[57] Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, III, 800-07.

> counted usually seven or eight persons, and these, together with their provisions, required the use of about twenty horses. Some fifteen parallel trails, formed by dragging wigwam poles, wound between two chains of mountains which sometimes drew together to offer at close range a view of what was most majestic about the wilderness, sometimes separated to reveal a series of infinitely varied and distant perspectives. This is what was called the great hunting trail.[58]

Larger hunting parties exhibited considerable organization: scouts were sent ahead and sentries were posted at night; secret communication was maintained by bird and animal cries and by sign language; messages were made by sticks and left behind for other members of the party to find.[59]

A major reason for this caution was the possible presence and predictably hostile reception of the Blackfoot. Because of their desire for the superior Flathead horses and also because of Flathead excursions in areas recently settled by the Blackfoot, the enmity was bitter. The gun and the lessons of fur trade had transformed Blackfoot aggression into an even more stealthy tactical acquisition of wealth in the form of horses.[60] At the same time, even during the period of Mengarini's residence, a religious overtone was evident in this conflict. Of this he wrote:

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[58] Point, Wilderness Kingdom, p. 43.

[59] Harold C. Driver, Indians of North America (Chicago and London, 1961), p. 364.

[60] Clark Wissler, Material Culture of the Blackfoot Indians (Washington, D.C., 1910), pp. 54-55.

> To get rid of the Blackfeet was harder than to get rid of mosquitos, for the Blackfeet were the hereditary foes of the Flatheads. Hence the history of our mission would, if written fully, be an account of Blackfoot inroads and Flathead reprisals. I have already related how, when we were but a few days in the mission, the long-robed Blackfeet came and drove off the horses of some of our Indians who were about twenty miles distant. I have now to record that they came by night to our mission itself and drove off our horses and mules. The frequency of the visits of the Blackfeet will cause no wonder when it is known that, had not a pestilence decimated the tribe a year before our arrival, our mission at St. Mary's would have been impossible. Moreover, the chief virtues of a long-robed Blackfoot were two, namely: to kill men, and steal horses. Of a long-robed I say, because there were short-robed Blackfeet, men small in stature, but sinewy, and capable of great endurance, though inclined to peace. The long-robed were bent upon war and pillage.[61]

Perhaps it is for these reasons that Point was to describe the Indians of the mountains as Low Britons, while those of the Plains, he likened to Parisians, cunning and deceitful.[62] Perhaps because of this difference, despite De Smet's ambitions, the Blackfoot did not eagerly respond to the appeals of the Jesuit missionaries until Father Peter Prando's work at St. Peter's mission in 1881.[63]

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[61] Partoll, "Mengarini's Narrative," p. 30.

[62] Joseph Joset, S.J., "Chronology of the Rocky Mountain Missions," MS, Box XLVIII, Jesuit Archives, Gonzaga University.

[63] Peter Prando, S.J., "Letter from Father Prando, Missions of the Rocky Mountains," The Woodstock Letters, XII (January, 1883), 34.

But other hardships were to lead to the following description of the Rocky Mountain missions: "Loca vastissima, aspera, pleracque (A place most desolate, rugged and harsh).[64] First of all the cold was such that around the layers of several blankets and buffalo robes, in which the men slept, they awoke at dawn to find robe and blankets frozen into one piece. Shortly after the house was finished, a little incident occurred which Mengarini uses to illustrate the intensity of the cold.

> I had filled a pan with water and placed it on the floor under my bed. It was not yet sunset when suddenly I heard a crackling noise, proceeding from the direction of the pan; I went to examine matters and found the water converted into one solid cake of ice, which, rising into a kind of hemisphere, was splitting into four parts.[65]

Obviously, it was impossible to say Mass without some heat beneath the altar for the water and wine would freeze. Loss in winter of hands and feet was, therefore, a repeated feature of the missions' history.

As spring replaced the heartless winter, the mosquito, equally as unwelcome as the Blackfoot, rose from the peaceful St. Mary's River. Because of the continued discomfort which resulted, Mengarini searched for a solution to the problem which reflects both humor and imagination.

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[64] A. Salvatore Casagrande, S.J., De Claris Sodalibus Provinciae Taurinensis, Societatis Iesu, Commentarii (Turin, 1906), p. 110.

[65] Mengarini, "Rocky Mountains," p. 307.

> Some great-great-grandfather mosquito must, I think, have established a monastic order among them, for no Carthusian or Cistercian could be more assiduous in choir duty than they were; or he must have given them at least a great love for religious orders, so persistently were they bent on dwelling with us. More than usually troubled one day by their assiduous attentions, I determined to rid myself of them. I therefore darkened my room so that the light was admitted at only one corner of the window. I then filled my room with the smoke of buffalo chips, and awaited the result. Soon, in single file, my tormentors made a rapid retreat towards the light, and left the room. I went outside to see the success of my experiment, and found quite a number of Indians drawn up in two lines and enjoying the rapid exit of the mosquitos.[66]

But hunger could not be dismissed as lightly. From their arrival at Fort Hall where the missionaries' depleted supplies were replenished with a few bags of toro, famine was not unknown. During the winter hunt of 1842, Mengarini, along with the others left behind, starved to the point of unrecognizable emaciation. A young Iroquois returning after an absence of six months asked if the young father who had been at the mission had left, so shrunken and unrecognizable was he from his diet of boiled roots. Nor was there wine for this young Italian. For daily Mass only a thimbleful was taken, since the year's allotment was but one gallon.[67]

Reasons for these appalling scarcities are manifold.

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[66] *Ibid.*, p. 198.

[67] *Ibid.*, p. 201.

One, the difficulty of communication is outlined by De Smet in a letter to the editor of the Precis Historiques in Brussels.

> I have this month dispatched a perfect cargo to him [Father Adrian Hoecken] by a streamer which was about to ascend the Missouri. It consisted of tools, clothes, and provisions of all kind. The boat will go 2,200 miles; then the goods will be transported by a barge, which will have to stem the rapid current about 600 miles; there will then remain 300 miles by land with wagons, through mountain defiles; so that the objects shipped in April can arrive among the Flatheads only in the month of October.[68]

The Association of the Propagation of the Faith, which furnished aid through the Jesuit Father General, proved to be the main material support of the missions. In both 1844 and 1845 the sum of 40,000 francs (8,000 dollars) was appropriated to the Oregon missions from this source. With the outbreak in continental Europe of the revolutionary troubles of 1847 and 1848, the Propagation subsidies began to diminish. In 1848 Father Roothaan was able to assign to the Rocky Mountain missions 32,549 francs of Propagation money, but in the following year the allocation did not go beyond twenty thousand.

Perhaps once a year did the men have contact with the outside world, and that at the cost of a perilous journey as far as Fort Vancouver which was at least more satisfactory than traveling overland to distant St. Louis.

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[68] Jean Pierre De Smet, Western Missions and Missionaries (New York, 1863), p. 295.

There they might receive a letter, though in three years Father Ravalli received none.[69] The goods, of course, could be transported only in good weather on mules because of the treacherous terrain.

In his yearly report to Father General Roothaan dated September 30, 1847, Mengarini clearly and pointedly outlined the defects in the Society's system of order and supply. First, he noted that the original church and home, made to serve for three weeks, was still in use after six years though twenty-two supports were needed to keep it standing. "We have been at various times forced to escape quickly in order to avoid the rats. When it rains, if the snow deepens, we cannot say Mass."[70]

But the depressing litany continued as he explained that it would take two years for the black wool ordered to replace their tattered soutanes to arrive. "Until the twenty pieces arrive from London in 1849, the priests must use the blue fabric the Hudson's Bay Company sells to the Indians to make leg coverings."[71] He hastened to add that if the Order would not deposit the mission funds with the Hudson's Bay Company via the English Jesuit Procurator, Father George Jenkins in London, but instead send it directly to the missions, he could buy at one-third the price from the competing American Fur Company. Here again, Mengarini had proposed a practical solution. Armed with a volume of facts and figures, he further observed:

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[69] Palladino, Indian and White, p. 47.

[70] Mengarini to Roothaan, St. Mary's, September 30, 1847, Mt. Sax., Vol. 1, Fol. II, p. 33, GASJ.

[71] Ibid.

> In other words, little more than 15,000 francs in all have been received by the three missions in the mountains, during the preceding three years. This subtracted from the 190,000 francs allocated to the missions during this period, leaves about 175,000.[72]

Nor did the difficulties end there. He added that what was ordered two years before was seldom what arrived two years later after passage through the many bureaucratic channels. "At the same time," he added, "the missions close to the forts at Walla Walla and Colville easily avail themselves of these sources for flour, animals, and all else they need, including the repair of their plows, etc."[73]

Added to these physical limitations was the fact that the task was too great for the numbers of missioners, although the group was enlarged in 1843. In September of that year Mengarini wrote: "I had the consolation of witnessing the safe and sound arrival at St. Mary's of Reverend Fathers [Peter] deVos and [Adrian or Christian] Hoecken."[74] But the projects and numbers of neophytes multiplied faster than the staff.

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[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Mengarini to Roothaan, Vancouver, September 26, 1844, Mt. Sax., Vol. 1, Fol. II, p. 2, GASJ.

In 1844 while on his way to the Willamette Valley to meet De Smet who had recently disembarked from a seven month voyage on the Belgian brig l'Infatigable, Mengarini's spirits were at low ebb. He was journeying to meet five more recruits, yet an uneasiness remained. At one point along the journey the frustration was mirrored by a departing Protestant missioner he encountered who banefully observed that considering what the Indians were and what he had, he could be of little help.

Fortunately, another party of assistants "had set out from Havre on March 20, 1844. Three of the party, Fathers Joseph Joset and Peter Zerbinatti, along with Brother Vincent Magri, reached St. Mary's by traveling overland from New York by way of St. Louis."[75] On Monday, October 7, 1844, the three along with Father Tiberius Soderini, a temporary replacement, arrived at the mission. Without guides they had journeyed to Fort Hall, and thence to the Bitterroot Valley.[76]

After the arrival of this party, the wheels of progress began to move both literally and figuratively. Among those who had accompanied Mengarini upon his return from his recent visit to Fort Vancouver was a millwright by the name of Peter Biledot. With the assistance of Brother William Calessens and Father Anthony Ravalli they set to work. In addition to Ravalli's medical and artistic talents, it was soon evident that he had a mechanical bent.[77] The former system of grinding flour by passing it through an ancient coffee mill was soon replaced by the first water powered grist mill in Montana which produced from ten to twelve bushels a day.[78]

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[75] Davis, St. Ignatius, p. 8; Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of the Northwest Coast, 1800-1846 (2 vols.; San Francisco, 1886), II, 702.

[76] Bischoff, Jesuits in Old Oregon, pp. 41-42.

The three also soon contrived to make a sawmill from old wagon tires twisted and bent to form a crank. Another they hammered and filed for a saw.[79] Soon they expected an abundance of planks for the construction of a new residence and a replacement for the ramshackle church.

"The afternoon for setting the mill in motion came," Mengarini wrote, September 21, 1845. "The whole day passed in earnest labor, when I returned to the house in the evening, Father Zerbinatti was not there." The bell for evening devotions had not been rung. Even though all the congregation searched, he could not be found "by a hundred quick eyes in search of the missing father."[80] By torchlight his drowned body was finally discovered. Father Peter Zerbinatti of the Roman Province of the Society, zealous catechist and student of languages, diminished the number of Jesuit pioneers at the moment when the Rocky Mountain missions to all appearances were well established.[81]

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[77] In addition to teaching the basic elements of agriculture, Father Ravalli had brought with him from Europe a set of twelve inch buhr-stones, which he used to set up a small water power gristmill which produced eight bushels a day. He also set up a carpentry and blacksmith shop. Soon he also set up a drug store stocked with medicines he had brought with him as well as native herbs. Louis W. Reilly, "Father Ravalli," Catholic World, CXXV (April, 1927), 696.

[78] Palladino, Indian and White, p. 46.

[79] Bischoff, Jesuits in Old Oregon, p. 65.

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[80] Partoll, "Mengarini's Narrative," p. 262.

[81] John Gilmary Shea, History of the Catholic Missions Among the Indian Tribes of the United States, 1592-1854 (New York, 1899), p. 476; and Bischoff, Jesuits in Old Oregon, pp. 62-63.

CHAPTER VII

A DREAM DIMINISHED

The very process of expansion and population increase, nourished by growing numbers of westward migrating whites, was to compound the tribulations of the small mission in the mountains. While De Smet envisioned and indeed pursued a policy of extending the Jesuit ministry to new tribes as opportunity offered--to Okinagans, or Flatbows, or Cayuse--Mengarini wryly observed in 1845: "There is no one to cultivate the Cayuse and Snakes who count many baptized persons among them and for all these we are all made responsible."[1]

Indeed, as Accolti was to write to Father General Roothaan on March 28 of that same year: "Our missions in the Rocky Mountains are still in embryo."[2] For this reason and for others, Roothaan did not always regard all of De Smet's reports as sober statements of fact. In this vein he once wrote the zealous young Belgian: "More than one person assures me that your relations published with so much eclat, are products of imagination and poetry."[3]

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[1] Mengarini to Roothaan, St. Mary's, September 30, 1849. Garraghan, Jesuits of the Middle United States, II, 335.

[2] Ibid., p. 426.

The problems of a limited staff also contributed to Roothaan's objecting to the nomination of Fathers Accolti and Mengarini to the episcopacy, proposed by Cardinal John B. Miege, formerly the vicar-apostolic of the Indian Territory which comprised all land lying between the Mississippi River and the Rockies. To the suggestion that the mission lands be divided into diocesan sees, Roothaan protested that at best the underpopulated areas should be administered by vicars-apostolic, but no need for bishops yet.

But problems were of a political as well as of an ecclesiastical nature. By 1845 the Oregon question was an all-absorbing theme. On the one hand, De Smet commented after an encounter with Peter Skene Ogden of Hudson's Bay Company in August 1845 that: "In the Oregon question, John Bull, without much talk, attains an end and secures the most important port of the country." This led to the impression, widely circulated by Dr. Whitman at Waiilatpu, that the Jesuit papists were in league with the British.

On the other hand, in a letter written by De Smet to Senator Thomas Hart Benton in 1849, De Smet reminisces that he once warned a young Britisher on the brig Modeste out of Vancouver "that British conquest of Oregon and

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[3] Roothaan to De Smet, Rome, April 14, 1851, cited in ibid., p. 427.

California was a dream not easily realized, and went on to remark that should the English take possession of Oregon for the moment, it would be an easy matter for the Americans to cross the mountains and wrest the entire country from them almost without a blow." The vaunt was punctuated by De Smet's proud assurance that although foreign born, he had for many years been a naturalized citizen of the United States.[4]

To the delicacy of the Society's political position could be added the complications presented by the geographic locations of their missions exactly within the disputed territory; the fact that the majority of the western settlers of Canada were of the Catholic faith, and that the American pioneer vanguard presented a sociological, as well as a religious challenge. Hand in hand with the opening of Oregon came an influx of whites and increase in the liquor traffic.[5] A few, like Francois Ermatinger, were among those traders who goodnaturedly capitalized upon the Indians' love of gambling. Near the present station of Arles he established the "Course De Femmes," where he rewarded the winners of the first women's foot race in the region, conducted on a course nearly two and one-half miles long.[6]

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[4] O'Hara, "De Smet in Oregon," pp. 257-58. It should also be noted, however, that after traveling over five thousand miles across the wilderness frontier, and journeying to Europe to raise funds and gather workers in 1843, De Smet continued his involvement in western missionary work while at St. Louis University. During this time the United States government came to look upon him as its most successful ambassador to the tribes. He became in a very true sense, Minister-Extraordinary to the Red Man. In 1851 he attended the great Fort Laramie Council at the request of Indian officials, and there successfully concluded the negotiations. In 1868 he embarked upon his greatest peace mission, going alone to the awesome camp of Sitting Bull. Rt. Rev. [James] O'Connor, "The Flathead Indians," Records of American Catholic Historical Society, III (1888-1891), 95.

Because of this Indian inclination to gambling, noted long before by Lewis and Clark who had watched them lose their beads and ornaments while playing the stick game, and reported upon the heavy-betting Nez Perce, as they wagered on horse races, the missionaries viewed the whites, especially the fur traders, as a pernicious influence. De Smet had been quick to take measures, unanimously abolishing the games as being against the commandments of God, adding: "Ye shall not covet anything that is your neighbor's."[7]

Nevertheless, the dice game was to reappear as did the bone game in which the magic power of the human bone being passed from one to the other supposedly numbed the power of the opposition.[8] Gustavus Sohon, a member of the surveying and exploration party headed by Isaac I. Stevens, governor of the Washington Territory, while visiting the Flatheads in the 1850s, provided us with a sketch of the Indians playing the ring game, another favored gambling pastime.[9] And, of course, the accursed stick game referred to by Mengarini was also revived. In one of the earliest detailed descriptions of the game by the trapper Warren Ferris in 1831, he also attempts to explain its place within Indian culture.[10]

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[5] Saum, The Fur Trader and Indian, p. 150; Sister Mary Jane Darcy, "Old Tale Tells How Many Came Christmas Eve to High Rockies," Eastern Montana Register [place of publication unknown], December 24, 1950, p. 4.

[6] Caleb E. Irvine, "Famous Indian Footrace," Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana, VI (1917), 479-80.

[7] Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 227.

Detailed descriptions of the Flathead stick games are found very infrequently in literature. Possibly the earliest passage concerning the form of the game was that written by Ferris during his travels in June 1831; it is perhaps the only detailed reference extant for the period before the Flathead came into regular contact with the white. In his account Ferris claimed:

> Gambling seems not to be disallowed by the religion of the Flatheads, or rather perhaps is not included among the number of deadly offenses, for they remain

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[8] George F. Weisel, "Ten Animal Myths of the Flathead Indians," B. Robert Butler, "Pre-history of the Dice Game of the Southern Plateau," Tebiwa, II (March, 1958), 65.

[9] Ewers, Sohon, p. 19.

[10] Merriam, Ethnomusicology of the Flatheads; and Stewart Cullen, "Games of the North American Indians," Bureau of American Ethnology, Twenty-fourth Annual Report (Washington, D.C., 1902-1907), 44-779.

> incurably addicted to the vice, and often play during the whole night. Instance of individuals losing all they possess are not uncommon. Their favorite game is called "Hand," by the hunters, and is played by four persons or nine. . . . Bettors provided with small sticks, beat time to a song in which they all join. The players and bettors seat themselves opposite to their antagonists, and the game is opened by two players, one of each side, who are provided each with two small bones, one called the true, and the other the false. These bones shift from hand to hand, for a few moments with great dexterity, and then hold their closed hands, stretched apart for their respective opponents to guess in which hand the bone is concealed.[11]

Perhaps the greatest problem, however, was disaffection. Some losses even occurred among the corp of missionary brothers. In one case, Brother Boris was necessarily dismissed after marrying a Mormon at Fort Hall, whom he divorced the next day because of her insistence upon Mormonizing him.[12]

Of serious concern, however, was the fact that the fervent congregations began to diminish in number and the Indians withdrew from the mission settlement. Finally, in 1847, Mengarini faced an open break with a faction of the Flathead Indians led by Little Faro who had left the village and had encamped on the opposite bank in the company of the American trappers John Owen and [?] Porter.

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[11] Quoted in Alan P. Merriam, "The Hand Game of the Flathead Indians," Journal of American Folklore, LXVIII (July-September, 1955), 313-24.

[12] Accolti to Roothaan, February 29, 1850, MS, Jesuit Archives, Gonzaga University.

The following spring brought further disavowal of the missionaries' teachings. While on their seasonal hunt, the Flatheads gave themselves up to lisence, once free of the missionary's vigilant eye.[13]

By 1848 Father Mengarini gave the mission but two years more to survive. Father Point had long before alluded to the obstacles of uniting people located in twenty-seven different areas, making reason dominate the tribal instinct and prodding into community action an inveterately lazy people. To this Fathers Accolti and Mengarini added the mournful fact that the best of the Indians had been snatched away by death. Perhaps, they pondered, once these few had been saved, the mission was to exist no more.[14]

In rueful summary Accolti wrote:

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[13] Ravalli to Roothaan, St. Mary's, June 29, 1847, quoted in Garraghan, Jesuits in the Middle United States, II, 376-77. Ravalli offers as one of the reasons for the hostility toward the priests upon the return from the spring hunt was the Flatheads' disappointment at the departure of Father De Smet who "had become like a brother to them." At the same time, in Ravalli's estimation, it had been De Smet who jeopardized the Flathead monopoly on the "high medicine" of Catholicism by sending Father Point among the Blackfoot. The move, one might say, upset "the spiritual balance of power." Robert A. Forbis, "The Flathead Apostasy," Montana Magazine of Western History, IV (Winter, 1951), 35-41.

[14] John O'Sullivan, S.J., "Temporary Closing of St. Mary's Mission in 1850," History of the Rocky Mountain Missions, p. 186, unpublished MS, Jesuit Archives, Gonzaga University.

> The old genera[tion] of that once-brave nation, is passed away, even the good half-breed Lolo, who two years ago was attacked and devoured by grizzly bears, while hunting. What now remains is nothing but a handful of indisciplinate and corrupted youth, which cares nothing about priests and Religion, and who have no respect at all even for their chieftains.[15]

Many other reasons have been advanced in explanation for the closing of the Mission, including De Smet's association with the Blackfoot, his conflict with the superiors of the Society, and his beguiling promises of village plows and livestock which he could not provide.[16] Furthermore, in his correspondence, Mengarini points to the inadequacies and infirmities of a limited staff, provided with insufficient supplies as well.

But of far greater significance was the dynamic force of the acculturative process to which the Indians of the Interior Plateau had first been exposed early in the 1700s. The very impact of the cross-sectional influences of the horse and the gun exposed them, as well as forced them to change. It was reasonable that these Indians would seek power, if possible, even immortality and invulnerability, in the face of these new perils. As they looked upon the first Frenchmen to enter the Spokan country of the Columbia, they designated the visitors as "Sema," a word of exclamation or astonishment: "The simple Indians thought if these wonderful 'Frenchmen' came, they would die no more, etc."[17]

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[15] Accolti to Roothaan, November 20, 1852, Mt. Sax., Vol. XVI, Fol. I, p. 45, GASJ.

[16] It is encouraging that the open accusations allowed De Smet an opportunity to speak in his defense. On May 1, 1852, he wrote: "In the spring of 1851 [actual date was 1850] the Flathead Mission was abandoned. The why and the how I think I could pretty easily guess at. I left it in a flourishing condition in 1846; the testimonials of Fathers Joset, Mengarini, Ravalli, Point, and Accolti bear testimony to my assertion. It is abandoned five years later and I am accused of being the cause of this by my liberality and promises to the Indians, which they [the resident Fathers] had been unable to sustain. Liberal in what? Promises of what? I am at a loss to imagine." Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, IV, 1480.

To achieve such ascendency over death, the Indian found it not impossible to disavow a polygamous social structure, despite the prestige that its obvious economic advantages provided to the braves. It was also conceivable to attempt an epochal transformation--in anthropological terms--from unspecialized hunting and gathering to agriculture.[18]

To the credit of the Society, it should be noted that in the process of catechizing and converting the missionaries pursued the second part of a twofold plan. They removed their charges, where possible, from the onslaughts of the marauding Blackfoot and the exploitive white trader. In return, the Indian readily accepted the practices outlined by the missionary, believing that the mana or sacred bread of Catholicism would make him immortal. In addition, to the obvious confusion over the Christian meaning of immortality, the Indians probably associated black with the color of death, and white (the complexion of the European missionaries) with the color of life.[19]

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[17] Angus McDonald, "A Few Items of the West," The Washington Historical Quarterly, VIII (July, 1917), 199. Ravalli offers an example of the types of temptations proferred the Red Man by the advancing white: "In the fall of 1848 and along the next year was the emigration of the Mormons going to establish themselves at Salt Lake not very far from Fort Hall. . . . before winter we had several of the trappers of the H. B. Company who had stampeded to trade ponies with them. They came to our mission with their herds, protesting to come to make their religion and winter with us. Helas! what was their religion?" Quoted in Bischoff, Jesuits of Old Oregon, p. 68.

[18] O'Connor, "Flathead Indians," pp. 85-100. Saum treats the same subject while relying on a much wider sampling in The Fur Trader and the Indian, pp. 211-19.

Soon, however, the Flathead found the Black Robe medicine to be itenemus (worthless). As they witnessed the burial of Father Zerbinatti, and as one after another of their own leaders died (some claimed from the excessive study demanded by the Black Robes), they became disgruntled. As had happened in 1847 at Waiilatpu, the Indians turned upon Ravalli and his medicines in 1848, accusing him of wanting to kill them in order to obtain their lands.[20]

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[19] Forbis, "Religious Acculturation of the Flathead Indians," p. 75.

[20] The hostility of the Indians generated by their disappointment with the inefficacy of the "Christian medicine," was also brought about by the increasing influence of antagonistic whites. The aggressiveness was also to cloud the Protestant missionary movement in Oregon. John M. Canse cites William H. Gray, History of Oregon (2nd ed.; Portland, 1870), as one contemporary who pointed to the declining fortunes of the Oregon missions from the period of the arrival of the "great reinforcements" in 1840 and

Perhaps the hostility was an echo of the growing nativistic doctrine of Smohalla, the "Indian dreamer" of the Columbia, who by 1850 had urged many to return to the primitive mode of life.[21] But even more persuasive is the suggestion that in their years of contact with the white, the Indian's fervor had lessened as he witnessed the disparity between the belief and the practices of many whites. The Flatheads, for example, had received forbidden playing cards and silver coins from the Mormons on their way to the Salt Lake. And from their own trader, Angus McDonald at Fort Connah, they had heard laughing ridicule leveled against all the Christian sects.[22]

Permanent settlers like Joseph Lampere and a hunter, John Silverthorn, were soon joined by westward emigrants stopping at St. Mary's, "who made use of some of the half-breeds whose conduct was little better than their own to destroy the confidence and alienate the hearts of the Indians."[23]

Thus, at the last Easter ceremony held at St. Mary's

1844. John M. Canse, "The Oregon Mission--Its Transition," Washington Historical Quarterly, XXV (July, 1934), 203-04.

[21] Frederick W. Hodge, Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico (2 vols.; Washington, D.C., 1912), II, 602-03.

[22] "Montana's Oldest Town Was Settled Years Ago," The Anaconda (Montana) Standard, December 17, 1889.

[23] Tom Stout, Montana, Its Story and Biography (3 vols.; Chicago, 1921), I, 156.

before its initial closing, the Indians stated simply: "You told us the religion of the whites would make us better men, yet the whites we see are worse than we are."[24]

No doubt, for these reasons, in the fall of 1848 or at the latest, the spring of 1849, Father Mengarini conferred with the Superior of the Rocky Mountain missions at the Coeur d'Alene settlement.[25] The question at hand was the closing of St. Mary's mission of the Bitterroot.[26]

Major John Owen, a neighboring settler, took title to the improvements at St. Mary's mission for $250, with the understanding that the claims to the church fields and mill would revert to the Fathers if they re-established a mission on the same spot before January 1, 1852. The text of the instrument is the earliest known record of such a transaction in the entire region.[27]

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[24] Anonymous, Sunday Missoulian (Missoula, Montana), August 24, 1941, p. 2.

[25] The question of which Superior authorized the closing of St. Mary's is answered by reference to the catalogue of the Missouri Vice-Province of the Society. It indicates that Father Joseph Joset at the moment was serving in that capacity. Father Michael Accolti had been designated his successor by Father General Roothaan in a letter dispatched from Rome in 1848, but it did not arrive until 1850. O'Sullivan, Rocky Mountain Mission, p. 192.

[26] Judge F[rank] W. Woody's claim that Blackfoot harassment of the missionaries prompted the closing of the Mission appears in Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana (2 vols.; Helena, 1896), II, 91. It is corroborated by Mengarini's official annual report of 1848 which stresses the immense threat posed by the Blackfoot. Mengarini to Roothaan, St. Mary's, June 30, 1848, Mt. Sax., Vol. I, Fol. VII, p. 4, GASJ.

It was the formal closing of an era. Within a decade the claim jumpers would overrun Grasshopper Creek. The dream of re-establishing the reductions as first developed in Paraguay had been cynically challenged by reality. In the face of it all, Mengarini wrote: "I then asked that I might be allowed to go someplace where I should hear nothing of what was going on."[28]

But the vow of obedience and Mengarini's unquestioned competence were to lead him to yet another horizon on America's expanding frontier.

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[27] Partoll, "Mengarini's Narrative," p. 66; John Owen, Journals and Letters of Major John Owen, ed. by Seymour Dunbar and Paul C. Phillips (2 vols.; Helena, 1884), II, 93.

[28] O'Sullivan, Rocky Mountain Mission, p. 193.

CHAPTER VIII

CALIFORNIA SERVICE

Father Mengarini did indeed leave the scene of the tragic Flathead reversal and for the next years efficiently dispatched the administrative affairs of the Society with his usual competence. From the Oregon country Mengarini, serving as procurator among other offices, carried on a brisk correspondence with the General of the Society in Rome, since the missions of the Rocky Mountains shortly after Father Joset's appointment as Superior were transferred from the jurisdiction of the Vice-Province of Missouri directly to Rome. Thus resources and recruits throughout Europe could be called upon.[1]

Shortly afterwards, however, following the appointment of Father Michael Accolti as Superior of the Oregon Province, it was decided that the labor be assigned to a specific group who would be responsible for the Order's expansion. The Italian Jesuit Province of Turin was charged with the care of the area and placed under one General Superior, Father Nicholas Congiato, from August 1,

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[1] Bischoff, Jesuits in Old Oregon, p. 214.

1854 until division in 1858.[2] Subsequently the area was divided into the California and Rocky Mountain missions. Despite the fact that the Piedmontese area traditionally had been anti-clerical, and that in the 1840s the radical political activities leading to Il Risorgimento were directed from the innocuous facade of the Whist Club of Turin,[3] there were enough religious vocations to supply the two Pacific Coast missions until 1909.[4] The eventual increase in vocations among resident Californians later led to the declaration of an independent Province of California. Included within it were southern Alaska and the Rocky Mountain mission.

In dispensing the responsibilities of his office, Mengarini wrote from Oregon City on November 20, 1853. As procurator of the mission he insisted on more economical use of money, urging that:

> It is necessary first that we pay the debt made at Vancouver two years ago which is about three thousand dollars, and no later than the month of April. I must have the wherewithal to buy provisions for the coming year. Otherwise I will pay six per cent interest and we will again be dependent upon the Hudson Bay Company which is on the verge of abandoning its posts to the Americans. I have expressed sympathy for anyone neither having funds or credit to pay the enormous prices, to which the governor of Fort Van-

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[2] Palladino, Indian and White in the Northwest, p. 52.

[3] Langer, Encyclopedia of World History, pp. 655-57.

[4] Garraghan, Jesuits of the Middle United States, II, 420.

> couver has been pleased to answer me that Jesuits are wealthy and it is good to make them spend.[5]

In a letter addressed to Father General Beckx from Champoeg in the Oregon Territory on January 15, 1855, Mengarini again revealed his sharp business acumen, noting that he had saved the mission nine hundred dollars by buying directly from the American entrepreneurs.[6] He added: "I propose, therefore, that whoever in the near future has charge of the temporal affairs of this Mission, you ask him to send a bill of exchange not later than the middle of May, that being the time when the goods are most available at most reasonable prices."[7]

The added significance of this letter lies in Mengarini's concern with the possible removal of Accolti as superior. Praising his influence and example, he noted that: "He is well respected not only by Catholics but also among the Protestants including the ministers who regard him as the only man able to do some good."[8]

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[5] Mengarini to Pellico, November 20, 1853, Vancouver, Mt. Sax., Vol. 2, Fol. I, p. 4, GASJ.

[6] This observation provides added support to Frederick Merk's thesis presented in The Oregon Question: Essays in Anglo-American Diplomacy and Politics (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), which stresses that the company's eventual withdrawal from lower Oregon, rather than increased American settlement, contributed to the political and diplomatic support of a treaty in 1846.

[7] Mengarini to Beckx, Santa Clara, January 15, 1855, Mt. Sax., Vol. 2, Fol. I, p. 11, GASJ.

[8] Ibid.

Continuing along this practical bent Mengarini concludes by suggesting that henceforth the Society's allocations be deposited not with the Hudson's Bay Company, but instead with Adams and Company which had gained a reputation for the speed with which it could collect and deliver mail and light freight. The company, which continued its transcontinental transport over the Isthmus until 1855, was also praised for its local service in the Pioneer and Democrat of Olympia:

> Not only do our mercantile and other business men avail themselves of the express, as a means of safe and speedy conveyance, but most of our farmers are transacting their business with California through the same medium. Nor is it wondered when the express is not infrequently days but actually weeks in advance of the mails at this place.[9]

Within a few years Mengarini was forced to shift the scene of his business activities to California. In 1855 he wrote of increasing Indian uprisings in the Oregon Territory, adding that Dr. McLoughlin, former Hudson's Bay Company chief factor and founder of Oregon City, "told me that it would be expedient, if during the hostilities, the missionaries would retire for a while."[10]

Another account justifies the move by providing the following facts:

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[9] Pioneer and Democrat (Olympia, Washington), January 27, 1855, quoted in Oscar O. Winther, The Old Oregon Country (Lincoln, Nebr., 1950), p. 153.

[10] Mengarini to Beckx, Santa Clara, December 11, 1855, Mt. Sax., Vol. 2, Fol. I, p. 13, GASJ.

> Such disinterest, sometimes marked by defiance and hostility, discouraged some of the Jesuits who were all harassed by raiding Blackfeet; and when the California gold rush of 1848-49 created a demand for spiritual workers in that part of the West, the Catholic missionary movement shifted much of its emphasis from the Northwest to the new mining regions, temporarily abandoning the Flatheads, withdrawing from the lower Columbia, and transferring some of the personnel from the Indians in Oregon to the white men in California.[11]

The advice could not have been more propitious. The discovery of gold had initiated a massive population explosion in the San Francisco Bay area. Furthermore, political ferment in Europe had driven liberal Germans from Westphalia and Baden Baden, as well as many Catholic south German states to California.[12] Many Italians, dislocated by the upheaval of the Italian liberation movement, as well as lured by the gleam of gold, flocked to the city. By 1851, when Mengarini arrived, there were already six hundred Italians in San Francisco alone.[13] By 1870 there were 4,660 in California as opposed to 91 in Oregon.[14] By 1890 there were 15,495 Italians in California, double the number of the next largest concentration in Louisiana.[15]

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[11] Alvin Josephy, The Nez Perce Indians (New Haven and London, 1965), p. 283.

[12] The United States Census for 1860 clearly indicates the widespread racial mix in Alameda and Santa Clara counties, for example. Although citizens of Australia, the Western Islands, China, and even Sweden were represented, the preponderance of the population came from such Catholic areas as Latin America, Italy, and southern German states. United States Census, 1860 (Microfilm), Reel G102, Los Angeles City Public Library.

[13] L'Eco d'Italia (New York), April 26, 1851.

The predominant religion practiced by the Italians wherever they went, especially in California, was Catholicism. In California they experienced little discrimination and they adapted so well to the countryside that they looked upon the state as their own land.[16] Italian Catholics were joined, as well, by hundreds of other European Catholics. But in all of San Francisco there was no church. The closest was the Franciscan mission, Old Mission Dolores, about three miles away across the sand hills of the port. Accolti was painfully aware of this during his visit in 1849. Soon men and money from the Rocky Mountain mission were diverted to the boomtown to the south. By December 9, 1849, Accolti and Nobili were stationed in California.[17]

At the invitation of Father John B. Brouillet, Vicar

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[14] Abstract of the Eleventh Census of the United States (Washington, D.C., 1894), pp. 38-39.

[15] Compendium of the Tenth Census of the United States (Washington, D.C., 1883), Part I, pp. 486-87.

[16] Rolle, Immigrant Upraised, p. 259. Rolle provides additional information on the work of the Italian Jesuits in "Italian Moves Westward," Montana Magazine of Western History, XVI (January, 1966), 13-24.

[17] Bischoff, Jesuits in Old Oregon, p. 49.

General of the Diocese of Nesqually, who was visiting San Francisco in 1849, and with the approval of the representative of the Right Reverend Diego Garcia, the late Bishop of California, Accolti and Nobili came from Oregon to supply the spiritual needs of the settlers. They arrived in San Francisco toward evening on December 8, 1849, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Accolti saw immediately upon beholding this huge concourse of adherents to Catholicism, not only a need for service, but also a source of support for the Society. In three or four years he observed, the Jesuits could operate several colleges in the region, for Catholics everywhere besought them. Requests had come from the south as well, he noted. At the pueblo of Los Angeles, the people, almost entirely Catholic, offered country land "for the establishment of schools and missions."[18]

The then Jesuit Superior, Father Joset, was persuaded, especially in light of Dr. McLoughlin's observation that "it [California] offers the best situation for a mission that [I] know. You can establish a mission in another place further south."[19]

The Jesuits were not long in San Francisco when they were joined by two parties of priests from the Congregation of Picpus, one from Valparaiso, Chile, and the other from the Sandwich Islands. To make the most constructive use of this enlarged corps of priests, the region was divided. The Jesuits assumed responsibility for the northern portion, the Picpus Fathers for the southern. This was logical, since many of the latter had come from an area where they used the Spanish language, and hence were best suited for work in Los Angeles and its environs.

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[18] Garraghan, Jesuits of the Middle United States, II, 407-09.

[19] Dr. John McLoughlin to De Smet, Vancouver, June 25, 1845, MS, Jesuit Archives, Gonzaga University.

But the news of Accolti's appointment as Superior of the Oregon Province placed the full burden of provincial administration upon the shoulders of young Father Nobili, who had pronounced his last vows only the year before. Nevertheless, in February 1850, before departure for Oregon, Accolti made yet another plea to Father General Roothaan for permission definitely to accept the invitation to California.[20] With St. Mary's mission closed, Father Mengarini could come southward from Oregon to aid the young Nobili in the administration of a school.

Accolti in writing to the Father General, described in greater detail the purposes of this initial foray into California. He wrote: "The objects of our expedition into this region according to Father Joset's instructions are manifold - 1. Above all to practice our sacred ministry especially among the sick, who in this city are numerous - 2. To determine whether the setting is favorable for the establishment of headquarters for the Society as Father Brouillet has suggested - 3. To raise money for our missions." Like most promoters of the time, he added: "Progress is rapid and impressive, magnificent new cities spring forth everywhere." But his parting salvo was fully intended to persuade Father General to allow him to return to his beloved California. He writes: "The Protestant ministers are here to snatch away every Catholic youth."[21]

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[20] Garraghan, Jesuits of the Middle United States, II, 409.

Accolti continued his propaganda at a later date, writing to Roothaan:

> A steamship line is shortly to be established between San Francisco and Canton in China. The result will be to reduce the traveling distance from here to Canton. This country is therefore going to become the world's emporium, it being a country which offers of itself so much treasure in gold, silver, mercury, platinum, zinc, coal and I know not what else. I don't mean to say by all this that the Society ought to run after all this temporal prosperity; but I do wish to say that it would be well to run after so many thousands of men who come here in search of this prosperity; I wish to say that this prosperity offers great (ms.) and occasions for doing good and good that has to be done on an immense scale. Poor California! No one can form an idea of the miserable condition of the people.[22]

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[21] Accolti to Roothaan, San Jose, California, February 29, 1850, MS, GASJ.

[22] Accolti to Roothaan, June 12, 1850, quoted in Garraghan, Jesuits of the Middle United States, II, 410.

In the face of such persuasion Rome could not resist.

By 1851 the Father General granted permission to establish a college in California. Opportunity and circumstances were to lead the Society to the abandoned site of Mission Santa Clara which had been secularized in 1836. When Bishop Joseph Sodoc Alemany arrived on the scene in 1850, he found one lone Franciscan attending the old mission founded in 1777, then was not restored to the church by the United States government until the Lincoln administration. It was here, he suggested, the Jesuits establish their college for boys. On March 19, 1851, the doors were opened.[23]

> Father Nobili immediately took possession of Santa Clara and opened the College with twelve pupils, two secular teachers, an Indian to serve as cook, and a respectable matron to take care of the house, the smaller boys, and I know not what else. There was no other capital to start with than one hundred dollars received as stipends for masses, and fifty more which the Bishop, though himself very poor, gave as an alms accompanied by God's blessing, that he might assist this little bark of a Catholic College thus for the first time launched under the sky of California.[24]

In a poor one-story adobe structure which had formerly served as a stable, the missionaries welcomed the student body, including many well-known California names, half of whom were Protestant. Within one year after Mengarini's arrival, the group grew to one hundred and eleven, representing fourteen states in the Union, as well as Chile, Mexico, Peru, Canada, Australia, the Sandwich Islands, New Zealand, England, France and Italy.[25]

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[23] "Jesuit Missions in California," The Woodstock Letters, XX (February, 1891), 351.

[24] Santa Clara College, 1851-1912 (Santa Clara, 1912), p. 7.

In an interview published in the San Francisco Daily Evening Picayune, February 18, 1852, Father Nobili referred to the educated project as a germ of an institution. The results, however, of the first final examinations "reflected much credit in the principals of the institution and their able and indefatigable teachers."[26]

The enterprise, which had originally been intended to provide shelter for Fathers Mengarini, Nobili, Goetz and DeVos in the nearby vacant mission, eventually provided them with far more than a means of subsistence, especially necessary in light of the precarious position of the Oregon missions. Santa Clara was to be the first collegiate institution in the State of California.

The following year, in a letter to De Smet, Accolti admitted, however, "that for the present our teaching has been little above the elementary and preparatory. The pupils are now so advanced to re[quire] something more for completing a course at least of a common and popular education."[27] In response to this need the staff liberally applied the basic premise of the Society's educational policy, the Ratio Studiorum--the full development of all those faculties that are distinctive to man which lead to culture and mental and moral development.[28] As a result, to the basic classical curriculum outlined in the Ratio Studiorum were added such courses as physics, Spanish (taught by Mengarini), and surveying, which hopefully would prepare the graduate for a profession and "also enable him to cope successfully even with the unforseen emergencies of life."[29]

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[25] The Woodstock Letters, XX (February, 1872), 352.

[26] Daily Herald (San Francisco), July 14, 1852.

An official request for college books reveals the intended breadth of training. In 1852 Nobili noted:

> I am also in great need of some books, which perhaps you could spare or find; such as Divies' or some other good course of Mathematics, say half a dozen--Spanish school and religious books--books of controversy--A De Colonia de Arte Rhetorica--Balis's works--some preachers--all the journal La Civilita Cattolica--Brownson's Review--(past and future, if they can be had), the Catholic Almanac and the Ordi Societatis annually and the Shephard of the Vall[e]y regularly.[30]

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[27] Accolti to De Smet, Santa Clara, April 15, 1853, MS, Jesuit Archives, Gonzaga University.

[28] Francis P. Donnelly, Principles of Jesuit Education in Practice (New York, 1934), pp. 8-18.

[29] Santa Clara College Catalogue (Santa Clara, 1910-1911); "Bulletin of Mr. Alfredo Bandini" (Santa Clara College, 1862), B. D. Wilson Collection, Box 59, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

[30] Nobili to Father William S. Murphy, Santa Clara, California, February 15, 1852, MS, Jesuit Archives, Gonzaga University.

As a result, it was possible for Father Congiato, president of Santa Clara College, to observe optimistically while writing to De Smet in 1855 that "our College is progressing . . . all over California, our holy religion is making progress and priests and churches are multiplying."[31]

Certainly one reason for their success was the missionaries' unceasing labor. Like the others, Mengarini carried a heavy burden as treasurer, professor of Spanish, and by 1856, father superior, as well as advisor on mission activity.[32] As a result of such dedicated effort, Santa Clara soon gained official recognition. On April 28, 1855, the school was chartered by the State of California. The faculty was thus empowered to grant degrees which would rank with those of any university in the land.

At the same time, however, three problems beset the young college. The first was the futile attempt to recruit missionaries from the Vice-Province of Missouri. An attempt to interest European Jesuits in California proved equally fruitless. The revolutionary disturbances of 1847 and 1848 had disorganized many of the Jesuit provinces, particularly in upper Germany and Switzerland.

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[31] Pierre Jean De Smet, Western Missions, 304.

[32] "Mission in California," Catalogus Sociorum et Officiorum Provinciae, p. 141.

To this problem was added the pressing financial condition of the college. The growing enrollment of the college had necessitated the purchase of a neighboring hotel for $2500 to provide dormitory and classroom space. In addition, new chemical apparatus had been imported from France, and 10,000 volumes of books had been added to the library. Soon afterward a property across from the college was purchased as parkland in order to eliminate the baneful influence of a Mexican dance hall.[33]

As a result, the financial report prepared by Treasurer Mengarini in July 1859, contained some hard realities. Characteristic of Mengarini, however, the assessment of the college's financial position also reflected a near-humorous view of human nature. In the financial summary losses for the session amounted to $13,503.79. But on May 17, 1859, these were reduced. Father John Cicateri had received $1100 from friends in Mexico.

The need must have been pressing for the August statement, divided again into Mengarini's very practical categories, revealed even more distressing circumstances:

Credit certain	$10,676.19
Credit probable	1,397.78
Credit difficult	10,193.06

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[33] "Weekly Talk," The Woodstock Letters, XX (July 24, 1856), 356.

The college was therefore forced to borrow at the exorbitant rate of two per cent per month.[34]

In his relentlessly frank manner, which was rarely without humor, even in translation, Mengarini pointed to the next problem facing the school as he painted a verbal picture of ruffled academia:

> I feel it is necessary to add two words about the school. The Fr. Superior Congiato has deemed it necessary to make some changes regarding both study and classes, as well as regarding the distribution of the hours. Since this change is not according to the views of the Fr. Rector [Nobili], I notice that the studies do not advance, for with two pilots the boat does not sail.[35]

The following year Father Nobili, the enthusiastic leader of the Santa Clara project, died after suffering from lockjaw for over a month. Father Congiato, at the time Superior of both the Oregon and California missions, was chosen successor by the trustees. In his absence the college was administered by the Vice-Rector, Father Mengarini. From September 14, 1856, to March 11, 1857, the missionary to the Flatheads directed one of the first colleges in the American West.

Despite the turbulence about academic policy, there was no need to apologize for the curriculum of the college. By 1850 there had been a proliferation of privately endowed colleges. Encouraged by the Dartmouth College decision, many secured charters from their states assured of the fact that these were inviolable. Fully one-half of the 100 chartered at mid-century were sectarian. But unlike Santa Clara College, the objectives of most were to confer the ministerial stole upon graduation.[36]

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[34] Santa Clara College, p. 44.

[35] Mengarini to Roothaan, Santa Clara, December 11, 1855, Mt. Sax., Vol. 2, Fol. I, p. 13, GASJ.

By contrast, the curriculum at Santa Clara was remarkably responsive to the shiftings of society to urbanized technology. Before 1859, when the proposal first failed, and long before 1862, when Justin P. Morrill, United States Senator from Vermont, finally secured the promise that military science and tactics would be taught by the states at land grant colleges in exchange for 300,000 acres of free land, Santa Clara had adopted a portion of the agriculture and mechanics curriculum of the land grant colleges. This advance is in part attributed to the practical Mengarini, who served as Director of Studies.

As early as 1855, Father Nobili had proudly displayed the drill team in its official maneuvers. The physical science and surveying classes took their place with modern languages, mostly taught by Mengarini, the second year after the school was opened. Soon the elaborate chemistry equipment was housed in its new laboratory. Another science building was constructed in 1861. And while Horace Mann, Henry Barnard and Calvin Stone traveled about Europe observing pedagogical techniques they so admired, European Jesuits were quite naturally applying these same methods in their California college.[37]

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[36] Adolphe E. Meyer, An Educational History of the American People (New York, 1955), pp. 150-201.

Community involvement, perhaps a reflection of the reform crusades at Lane Theological and Oberlin, prompted the students to organize the first solemn flag raising in California. With the coming of the Civil War, California, the free state, which wanted no part of squatting Negro miners, promised a verbal allegiance to the Republicans only when they had modified the campaign platform in 1860. But the call to arms was not ignored at Santa Clara, and on April 15, 1863, General of the Army James Shields reviewed the cadets, many of them carrying the muskets provided as a gift from Governor Leland Stanford. Throughout the war the students also organized benefits to aid the wounded.

The educational awakening which followed Appomattox, stimulated the formation of numerous professional societies. It was at Santa Clara College that historians, including Hubert Howe Bancroft, who placed his great library at the disposal of the Society, gathered to establish the

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[37] _Ibid_., p. 205.

Historical Society of California on June 6, 1871. Considering Mengarini's great interest in ethnohistory, it is safe to assume that he attended that historic meeting.

It was to another such professional organization that Mengarini was to submit a lengthy study of the vocabulary of the Santa Clara Indians.[38] It is difficult to conceive of an opportunity when he would have had time to gather the Indian language words together, probably from old Inigo and other old Indians who lived in the neighborhood of the mission, and serving all the while in responsible administrative capacities. Perhaps the impulse came from his memories of St. Mary's. His neophytes had proved faithful to the Church.

In fact, in 1862 Father Ravalli and Father Joseph Giorda reopened the mission. Of their progress, Father Joseph Menetrey wrote: "I think Fr. Mengarini will be pleased to learn that his Flatheads have been converted anew."[39] Father Mengarini knew this already. He had received a delegation of them who had come all the way to California to beg him to return. Instead, he became even more deeply involved, even continuing his musical composition and performance.

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[38] Mengarini, "Vocabulary of the Santa Clara Indians," pp. 538-49.

[39] James O'Malley, S.J., "Northwest Blackrobe, Story of the Life and Work of Father Joseph Cataldo, S.J., 1837-1928," MS, Jesuit Archives, University of Santa Clara.

Mengarini served as treasurer of the College from 1867 to 1882. For the year 1883 he served as assistant treasurer.[40] The office not only required that he find the wherewithal for the school's inevitable expansion, serve as comptroller, but also act as conservator for the more spendthrift young men. An example of the latter role is evident in a letter to Abel Stearns regarding his son, Alfredo:

> The boy has spent all the money ($5.00) you gave him in San Francisco. From the tenor of your letter addressed to the President on August 26th, I understood that you had given the whole five dollars to last for half session but when I told him so, I found that he had spent the whole of it already. Shall I advance him 50 cents per week or let him go without pocket money for the next six weeks.[41]

In another letter to Abel Stearns, the treasurer reveals his long familiarity with medicine. In discussing Master Alfredo's insistence upon returning home because of illness, he observes:

> He is determined to go home, for the reason he says that his mother has a remedy. That can cure him in a short time . . . the treatment given to him here was calculated not to check, but to help the bad humors to come out through the pores, or he most probably would have terminated with typhoid fever,

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[40] Arthur D. Spearman, S.J., to Gloria Lothrop, Santa Clara, July 18, 1968, personal correspondence.

[41] Mengarini to Don Abel Stearns, Santa Clara, September 4, 1862, Gaffey-Stearns Collection, W. N. 776, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

but the boy is too impatient to wait.[42]

Thus went the busy routine of the aging missionary. Within a few more years the Society in California would number 150 members. At Santa Clara the enrollment was rising to 200. In the midst of this success born of such adversity, the seventy-six-year-old priest, fifty-eight years an ordained Jesuit, died of apoplexy on September 23, 1886.[43]

His many "firsts" had been crowned by the triumph of his educational endeavor, the establishment of the Jesuit College of Santa Clara. "The progress was such that ten years after Fr. Mengarini's death the College received praise for the remarkable completeness of its equipment in several special departments. The physical laboratory was singled out as having few rivals in the United States."[44]

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[42] Mengarini to Stearns, Santa Clara, September 12, 1862, *ibid*.

[43] *Vita Functi, Provinciae Oregensis*, p. 17.

[44] John P. Munro-Fraser, *History of Santa Clara County* (Santa Clara, 1881), p. 140.

CHAPTER IX

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DOCUMENT

The significance of Gregory Mengarini's narrative is that it is more than a mere log of his work among the Flathead Indians. Following a tradition pursued with scholarly alacrity by Jesuit missionaries beginning in the 1500s with Father Mateo Ricci, S.J., the famed emissary to China, Mengarini scrupulously compiled an ethnohistory. Although he devotes himself to an extensive disquisition of the linguistic roots and patterns of Salishan speech, and records the death rituals and the male pubertal rites, he transcends the scientific data gathering approach of such ethnologists as Swanton and Turney-High.[1] Mengarini's is a more descriptive style. His eye-witness account of the buffalo hunt notes the routine, the division of labor, and the method of attack, but he also observed the occasional disgressions and indiscretions, the disappointments and the hunger.

By strict definition the "Memorie" provides us with an ethnographic portrait of Flathead culture.[2] Mengarini's description of Flathead hospitality and friendship, his explanation of the naming of the newborn, and his unparalleled description of the process of acquiring a guardian spirit are each conveyed as part of a descriptive narrative. The approach is in the tradition of the ethnographic style first employed by Herodotus in the fifth century B.C. In Book I of the History of East and West the titular "father of history" discusses the origins of the Hellenic race. In Book II he describes the system of caste in contemporary Egypt, while Book V traces the transmission of the Phoenician alphabet.[3]

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[1] Henry H. Turney-High, *The Flathead Indians of Montana* (Menasha, Wisconsin, 1937); James R. Swanton, comp., *The Indian Tribes of North America, Bulletin 145 of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (Washington, D.C., 1952).

No less a task is Mengarini's careful recording of the Flathead value system, his detailed description of the various kinds of "medicine," and his explanation of the Flathead pattern of musical composition. Clearly, the good Father has offered us far more than pious hagiography.

To this definition should be added yet another factor which gives increased significance to the document. As Mengarini describes the pattern of annual migrations, he refers to the traditional emnity with the Blackfoot, and the consequent alliance of the Indians of the Interior

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[2] The Winston Dictionary, ed. by William D. Lewis (Philadelphia, 1940), p. 33.

[3] Herodotus of Halicarnassus, History of East and West, ed. by Charles Hude (Oxford, England, 1909), passim.

Plateau. Thus, to his data he has added the dimension of history, as he records the inevitable collision of the horse and gun cultures of plateau and plain. Although Mengarini does not focus upon the formulaic diffusion-assimilation of culture traits as a result of this encounter, he does provide an ample number of examples where the status-wealth symbol of the one was pursued by the other.

Further proof that the document is essentially an ethnohistory is provided in the chapters "Call to Religion," "Coming of the Black Robe" and "Challenges Facing the Black Robe." This portion of the account records contacts, with Iroquois, whites, and eventually the Black Robes, and pioneer settler, with his European civilization. Although Mengarini's account confuses the delegations, he does provide hitherto unknown information regarding the names of members of the delegations. His account of the death of Old Ignace which places the burden of guilt directly on William Gray, differs appreciably from Gray's own account which excuses his identifying the Flatheads as Snakes on the basis of a well-intended act of protection. Mengarini's account of the entire history of the search for the Black Robes carries greater validity since it was drawn directly from the firsthand recollections of old Gervais and others.[4]

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[4] Garraghan, The Jesuits of the Middle United States, II, 248, note 27.

Certainly, the closing of St. Mary's mission, which Mengarini claimed resulted from the incursions and criticisms of white settlers, the incessant attacks of Blackfoot, as well as the Flatheads' failure to make the transition from unspecialized hunting and gathering to the agricultural system necessary to survive the onslaught of the more complex white culture, is a distressing account. But it is meaningful because Mengarini has placed it within an historical context.

The document has special significance in another sense as well. To this day ethnographers and anthropologists have had difficulty in identifying the Flatheads' place of origin, or classifying them according to culture traits. As Mengarini noted, although inhabitants of the interior Plateau, they made semi-annual forays onto the plains and there adopted much of the Plains culture complex. As a result, in his first culture area mapping of American Indians, Clark Wissler placed the Flathead Indians within the Plains Area, indicating that their pattern of traits included dependence upon the buffalo, a limited use of berries and roots, an absence of fishery and a lack of agriculture. The use of the tipi as a movable dwelling and transportation over land by means of dog and travois (later the horse) and clothing of buffalo and deer skin were some additional characteristics. Most of these Mengarini clearly describes in his documentation of Flathead life. In fact, the "Memorie" may serve to greatly clarify the issue, for in Wissler's revised edition, the Interior Salish are presented as most typical examples of the Plateau group, adding that there are difficulties "in systematically characterizing this culture, arising from lack of geographical unity."[5] In 1923 Wissler's original mapping was altered by A. L. Kroeber who first placed the Flathead in the Plateau Area, and later rearranged them as an intermountain subgroup of the intermediate region.[6]

The origin of the Flathead, therefore, is still a matter of debate. Teit, basing his conclusions on the word of informants, speculated that they came from a territory east of the Rocky Mountains, thus falling well within the present Plains Area.[7] This contention was bitterly disputed by Turney-High, who tentatively suggested a western origin near the seacoast just below the southern boundary of Oregon. He based his position upon Flathead legend and linguistic evidence.[8] Interestingly enough, many of the long forgotten legends which Mengarini recorded during the dusk of Indian hegemony over the Rockies closely parallel the tales of the lower Columbia.[9]

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[5] Clark Wissler, The American Indian (3rd ed.; New York, 1938), p. 222.

[6] Alfred L. Kroeber, Anthropology (New York, 1923), p. 337; also Anthropology (rev. ed.; New York, 1948), p. 788.

[7] Teit, "Salish Tribes," p. 23 *et seq*.

[8] Turney-High, Flathead Indians, p. 11.

Regardless of origin, the fact remains that at the beginning of the period of exploration Salishan settlements extended from western Montana across Idaho and Washington into British Columbia. But the true home of the Salish proper or Flatheads, until final settlement on the Flathead Reservation in 1891, was the Bitterroot Valley lying between the Bitter Root Mountains and the Rockies.[10] Its contour, composition and climate are indelibly captured in Mengarini's narrative.

A distinctive feature of the area was the abundance of natural food resources. By hunting the abundant wildlife and collecting the edible roots and berries, particularly the camas or bitter root plant, the Flathead secured ample subsistence in prehorse days.[11] Mengarini's record notes that this type of food gathering was often pursued of necessity through the 1840s.

Like Mengarini, later researchers have been perplexed by another paradox the Flatheads present. There has been unceasing disagreement as to the identification of the Flathead within a linguistic unit. All researchers place the Flatheads within the Salish language family but always with some indication that dialect differences set them off from other groups. Voeglin, for example, remarks that "dialect differences are especially notable among the Flathead and Spokan bands."[12] Swadeesh further emphasizes this, noting with regard to the Kalispel group (in which he included the Flatheads):

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[9] Verne Ray's studies suggest, however, that the evidence of Plains characteristics along the eastern Plateau appears to have been recently superimposed, as well as balanced by assimilation of coastal traits. Cultural Relations in the Plateau of Northwestern America (Los Angeles, 1939), p. 145.

[10] Garraghan, Jesuits of the Middle United States, I, 264.

[11] John C. Ewers, Gustavus Sohon's Portraits of Flathead and Pend d'Oreille Indians, 1854 (Washington, D.C., 1948), pp. 13-14.

> Taking all the foregoing facts into consideration, we deduce that the linguistic forerunners of the Kalispel group of the Coeur d'Alene must have once been neighbors of the coast dialects, perhaps living on the upper Columbia River. Inroads of Athabaskan tribes must have split them off from their neighbors and started moving them eastward.[13]

In a later study, Swadeesh approaches Mengarini's position that the Salishan language as spoken by the Flatheads served the role of a lingua franca in the Northwest. By enlarging his categories, Swadeesh allows for a similar inference. He speaks of the Coeur d'Alene language, in which he includes the Flathead, as peripheral to the more typically Salish groups, thus forming a separate unit. The Coeur d'Alene (including Flathead), Spokan-Kalispel, Columbia, Okanagan, Thompson, Shuswap and Lillooet are placed together in a single linguistic group called the "Interior Division."[14]

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[12] C[arl] F. Voeglin, "North American Indian Languages Still Spoken and Their Relationships," in Language, Culture and Personality, ed. by Leslie Spier and Alan I. Hallowell (Menasha, Wisconsin, 1950), pp. 15-40.

[13] James Swadeesh, "Linguistic Evidence for Salish Prehistory," Indians of the Urban Northwest, ed. by Marian W. Smith (New York, 1950), pp. 151-60; Vernon D. Malan, "Language and Social Change Among the Flathead Indians" (unpublished Master's thesis, Montana State University, 1948), pp. 23-63.

Although Suttles and Elmendorf may disagree with Swadeesh or Mengarini as to linguistic origin, their research supports Mengarini's contention that the language of the Flatheads was a reliable basis for communication north of the Plains. They summarized the language group of the Flatheads as follows:

> Salish consists basically of two language chains, one extending along the coast, its center being the Georgia Strait-Puget Sound trough or perhaps earlier the western slope of the Cascade range, the other extending northwest to southeast through the intermountain interior but also following major river courses--up the Fraser, down the Okanagon and upper Columbia, then up Clark Fork and Spokane.[15]

Salishan, in conclusion, appears to be spoken in the northern half of the Interior Plateau among the Flatheads, Coeur d'Alene, Spokans, Kettles, Okanagans, Kalispels, San Poils, and Columbias. The only exception to the group is the Kutenais tribe which speaks an entirely different language.[16] The complexity of this linguistic family with its dialect differences explains Mengarini's pronounced concern with the Flathead tongue, devoting a significant portion of his narrative to a discussion of it. Of course, as a linguist and author of the first Salish grammar, he was well-prepared to gather evidence which may contribute to a solution to the perplexing and still-unsolved question of Salish origin.

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[14] James Swadeesh, "Salish Internal Relationships," International Journal of American Linguistics, XVI (Summer, 1950), 157-67.

[15] Walter Suttles and William W. Elmendorf, "Linguistic Evidence for Salish Pre-history," Symposium on Language and Culture (Washington, D.C., 1963), pp. 41-52.

It is not enough, however, that the 1848 "Memorie" be identified as accurate ethnohistory, for Mengarini's work offers another unique facet. As he explained in his later recollections published in The Woodstock Letters, as soon as he had mastered the language, he began to ask the people about their beliefs.[17] Only the elders were still able to reconstruct and describe in detail what they had learned as children of the Flathead cosmology. Their legends of creation, salvation, and the securing of sunlight and fire strike dramatic parallels with the Judeo-

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[16] Swanton, Indian Tribes of North America, BAE Bulletin 45; Edward S. Curtis, The North American Indian, Being a Series of Volumes Picturing and Describing the Indians of the United States and Alaska, ed. by Frederick W. Hodge (2 vols.; Seattle and Cambridge, 1907-1930); Bernard Alvord, Report Concerning the Indians in Territories of Oregon and Washington, H.R. Exec. Doc. No. 75 (Serial No. 906), 34th Cong., 3rd Sess. (Washington, D.C., 1857), all offer detailed information.

[17] Mengarini, "Rocky Mountains," p. 308.

Christian tradition. Their explanations of eternal justice, the destiny of man and the immortality of the soul are recorded in no other nineteenth century account. Although ethnologists, including Weisle, Clarke, and Gibbs, have recorded parallel legends (sometimes inaccurately abstracted from Mengarini), only Mengarini has reconstructed an unbroken account of the beliefs of the Flatheads or the "Salish Proper" extending from what would parallel the time of Genesis to the Nativity. It should be added that although portions of Mengarini's account have been published before, the transcription which follows, taken from the 1848 manuscript written in his own hand, has eliminated numerous errors.

To this fund of knowledge, the isolated Jesuit scholar added information he had gathered about Indian herbology. Its value is greater than to merely satisfy our curiosity. The account of the phenomenon which destroyed a large part of the tribe about a half century before Mengarini's arrival provides needed information regarding volcanic eruptions in the 1700s in the Pacific Northwest currently being studied at the University of Washington by Professor Richard Dougherty and his colleagues.

Necessarily there are limitations since every selector of facts will be persuaded by his predilections, as well as convictions. In this case, Mengarini was burdened by two limiting frames of reference through which he viewed the Flathead. Because of what he was forced to ignore or draw into this respective focus, we have a distorted picture of the Flathead. The observer was a European and quite logically applied that culture as the paradigm in judging what he saw to be "savages," a term he consistently uses. Their economic, governmental, educational and familial patterns judged according to European criteria necessarily were seen as negatives by Mengarini.

It must not be forgotten, however, that it was at their request that the missionary came. As a Catholic evangelist, he responded to their supplications and offered the conversion they sought. In pursuing this plan, he perforce insisted that they abandon the culture patterns inimical to this doctrine.[18] Status-laden polygamy and the pursuit of the sumesch were pronounced anathema. Practices adopted from adversaries on the plains, the taking of scalps, the taking of the horse and gun of a vanquished adversary, and the participation in the Skull dance by the wives and sisters of the victors were all enjoined.

As with all cultures, the Flathead way of life was a web of traditions composed of a variety of accumulated techniques, institutions, and ritualized forms of behavior. Alteration of a portion of the basic social pattern profoundly affected the remaining parts. For example, the annual economic cycle of the Flatheads with its succession of movements and activities evolved in conformity with changes in local plant and animal life. The Indians shifted regularly between areas of most hunting and gathering until the agricultural pattern which conflicted directly with the Flathead migratory pattern was introduced.

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[18] Berkhoffer, Salvation and the Savage, p. 111.

Mengarini marveled at the rapid demise of certain cultic practices. No mention was made of them; instead the Flatheads overwhelmingly embraced Catholicism, fasting for days at a time and requiring the distribution of from 50,000 to 60,000 consecrated hosts per year, so frequent was their reception of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.[19]

At the time of his writing, he discounted the possibility that faith in the traditional rituals as well as those absorbed from the plains was held in abeyance while the "High Medicine" was being tested. The previous winter a few Flathead had encountered a large force of Blackfoot on the plains. In the ensuing battle fifty of the latter were killed without the loss of a single Flathead. Could it be possible that the religion of the Iroquois and the white man had finally made them invulnerable to the Blackfoot's savage rapacity? With the Black Robes among them, they would now know for certain. The curious absence of any reference to the sweat house, the Blue Jay dance, the Prophet dance, or the Skull dance in Mengarini's account give added credence to the hypothesis that all was being held in abeyance.

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[19] "The Opinion of Father Mengarini Given by Letter on the Actual Temperament of the Savages of the Mountains," Mt. Sax., [no citation provided], GASJ.

While perhaps unaware of this cultural schizophrenia, Mengarini in his later letters again avoids the opportunity to explore the sudden rejection of Catholicism during the Little Faro rebellion of 1847. The Black Robes had been referred to as "men of high medicine." Furthermore, they were as white as the immortal sons of Amotkan. As they spoke of eternal life, they epitomized the invulnerability to death that the beleagured Flathead sought. But old age, epidemics, and battles had proved to the Flatheads that they had remained mortal despite their total submission to Christianity.

In fairness to Mengarini, his appraisal of the events was necessarily distorted by a lack of historical perspective and by the fact that "not all the facts were in."

The reasons for the resistence and eventual reversion are, in fact, historical, anthropological and psychosocial. First, as has been noted, the 1830s and 1840s presented a period during which Indians of the Interior Plateau were constantly threatened and found food supplies limited by the aggressive Blackfoot. This adversary was soon joined by the white settler who often felled the bison, simply for sport, as he shot from passing railway cars. In facing neither adversary had the "High Medicine" --in other words, Christian teachings--made the Indian invulnerable. From the anthropological point of view two factors portending a negative prognosis for the success of Christian evangelism should have been considered. First of all, the weakest element, among the interior tribes, had been religion. Simple fetishism, with neither cult nor priesthood and only the beginnings of spiritual concepts, resulted in a theological vacuum in which Christianity was eagerly embraced. The white man's religion was welcomed though only as a cultural overlay in a society experiencing upheaval as a result of recent assimilative contact with the war-hunt complex of the plains culture.[20]

Added to this instability of the recipient culture was a problem presented by both Catholic and Protestant conversion. Both religious sects saw as part of conversion adaptation to their own economic order: industry should supplant sinful idleness; farming would encourage private property and thus economic and social stability. Since both Indian and missionary viewed the culture of the other as a totality, the Indian convert to Christianity was also a convert to civilization and was forced to repudiate his own who had not been saved. In such an instance, not only did he find himself alienated from his indigenous culture and his traditions suspect, but having become truly Christian he was logically forced to be anti-Indian and thus experience a day-to-day sense of alienation and anomie.[21]

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[20] Claude Schaeffer, "The First Jesuit Mission to the Flatheads, 1840-1850," Pacific Northwest Quarterly, XXVIII (July, 1937), 227-50.

It may well be that the 1847 Whitman Massacre at Waiilatpu, with the avowed intent of killing all the "Boston People," may have appeared to be rallying round the frenzied fear that the recent measles epidemic had somehow been of Dr. Whitman's doing. But underlying the massacre, the outrages at Lapwai, the treachery of Little Faro, there was the confused protest of a society inevitably facing annihilation by an advancing foreign culture.[22] Its dedicated evangelists had simply hastened the process although the significance escaped them. Their disappointment was made more acute by the increasing number of non-religious whites who settled in the West. As Father

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[21] Forbis, "Religious Acculturation of the Flathead Indians of Montana," pp. 23-65; Forbis, "The Flathead Apostasy," pp. 35-40; Henry H. Turney-High, "The Blue Jay Dance," American Anthropologist, XXXV (March, 1933), 103-07.

[22] Within a dozen years after the closing of St. Mary's mission, the rich gold discoveries in Grasshopper Creek had turned the area into another frontier boom town. "Fort Owen Founded Between Fur Trade and Gold Rush Days," Great Falls (Montana) Tribune, September 3, 1950, p. 2.

Joseph Joset forthrightly observed of the Rocky Mountain missions:

> We must change our customs to suit our changed circumstances. We came hither expressly to work for the Indians' welfare, and up to the present time we have had dealings only with them. In order, however, to keep our missions flourishing we ought to conciliate the newcomers. On the other hand, the Indian keeps an eye upon his rival whose superiority he cannot fail to recognize. If then the whites appreciate the missionaries, the Indians will also esteem us more.[23]

Given the fact that Mengarini was an ethnohistorian neither by training nor conscious intent, it is unfair to belabor the limitations of his recorded observations. Mengarini perhaps was not interested in associating the ritual floggings with the tradition of penance introduced by the Iroquois trained at the Catholic mission at Caughnawaga.[24] The duty was not his to study the motives behind conversion. Nor was it necessary for him to explain the gradual ascendency of women in the Flathead culture concurrent with the rise of the buffalo economy. The horse had made it possible for women to join the hunts. Since only the women were skilled in processing the buffalo for its many uses in tribal life, their presence resulted in greatly increased supply and wealth. Furthermore, the depredations of a war culture and the impact of pandemic disease had reduced the number of men and placed a greater burden of leadership upon the women.

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[23] Joseph Joset, S.J., "Washington Territory Then and Now," The Woodstock Letters, XII (1883), 174.

[24] Schaeffer, "First Jesuit Mission to the Flatheads," pp. 227-50.

Since Mengarini, writing in the 1840s, stood in the midst of the Indians' double-culture crisis, it would have been impossible for him to have achieved more perspective than he did. Unaware of the fact that the aggressive and successful incursions of armed plains Indians had shaken the faith of the interior Indians, Mengarini could not have been aware of the threatened value system they now questioned.[25] By the same token, traveling with the vanguard of whites across the frontier, Mengarini could not have imagined the amount of support, economic and otherwise, the Jesuits would have had to provide in order for an Indian enclave to survive intact. Such interpretation requires perspective of time and perhaps is the proper ken of the social anthropologist.

The fact remains that the fund of Indian history, lore and legend contained in the "Memorie" has permanent value. The history of the native races of the upper Columbia, according to Bancroft, can never again be written without consulting the writings of Gregory Mengarini, S.J.[26] In another manuscript George Gibbs makes the comment: "Of the externals of savage life on the Oregon coast, there are many graphic and full accounts; but an insight into their minds is not so easy to reach . . ."[27]

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[25] Burns, Jesuits and Indian Wars, p. 12.

[26] Bancroft, History of the Northwest Coast, 1800-1846, II, 186.

Mengarini, despite the error of some basic postulates, approached the level of insight Gibbs described. His linguistic talent, his instinctive ethnohistorical point of view and his scholarly patience have provided us with an incomparable record of a subculture in transition.

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[27] Gibbs, Report of Explorations, I, 294.

PART II

THE DOCUMENT

Recollections of the Flathead mission containing brief observations both ancient and contemporary concerning this particular nation. Written by G[regorio] Mengarini--1848.

CHAPTER I

THE LANGUAGE OF THE FLATHEADS

The Flatheads, who in their own language call themselves the Salish (Germanic pronunciation) and who in Latin would be called Selici Selicorum,[1] are not, as it seems at first, a part of the Kalispel and *Slga'tkomstcint* nations.[2] Perhaps the Flathead separated from these for the same reasons as did the Pend d'Oreilles of the upper and lower lakes.[3] In recent times, for example, the Upper Pend d'Oreilles have divided into several bands as a result on the one hand of the scarcity of food, and on the other because of some arrogant tribesmen who, vaunting themselves as leaders, have gained the support of some of their nation.[4]

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[1] The Salish, a name, perhaps derived from the Okinagan word for people which is "salst," formerly constituted a large and powerful division of the Salishan family to which they gave their name. A more popular designation of this tribe is Flatheads, given to them by surrounding people, not because they deformed their heads, but because in contradistinction to most tribes farther west, they left them in their natural condition on top.

According to Teit, the Salish once extended farther east, where they were related to tribes of that region which he calls the Sematuse (the foolish folk) and the Tunahe. Teit states further that these Salish were driven westward out of the plains by the Blackfeet, particularly after the acquisition of guns by the latter. Turney-High, on the other hand, regards the Salish as rather late intruders into the plains of the west. According to Swanton, however, the pressure of tribes pushing westward as a result of the migrations of their neighbors to the east as soon as the latter obtained guns is such a common story that it is highly improbable that the Salish escaped its diffusive effects. Hodge, Handbook of American Indians, II, 415-18; Swanton, Indian Tribes of North America, pp. 393-95; Turney-High, The Flathead Indians of Montana, pp. 5-6; Teit, The Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateaus, p. 295; Albert J. Partoll, "The Flathead-Salish Name in Montana Nomenclature," Montana Magazine of Western History, I (January, 1951), 37-48. A discussion of the common practice among Indians of referring to themselves as the "people," the "right people," which is expressed in the word, "selish," is included in DeVoto, Across the Wide Missouri, p. 10. An extensive discussion of the possible genesis of this name is offered by Alvin M. Josephy, "The Naming of the Nez Perce," Montana Magazine of Western History, V (October, 1955), 1-19.

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[2] A survey of recent studies would suggest a slight confusion of terms here, as well as an erroneous conclusion. First of all, Swanton designates the Kalispel or "camas people" as members of the same interior Salishan division to which the Flathead belongs. Furthermore, Mengarini speaks of the Kalispel and *Slga'tkomstri'nt* as two nations. In truth, the latter is the name of the Pend d'Oreilles in the Coeur d'Alene language. Pend d'Oreille is simply an additional name given to the Kalispel because of their taste for large shell earrings. In summary, the two tribes are one and the same. And they are, indeed, members of the same family. Swanton, *Indian Tribes of North America*, p. 399; Turney-High, *The Flathead Indians of Montana*, pp. 297-98.

[3] Teit's contention is that the separation of some Kalispel into a Pend d'Oreille tribe is a white man's invention and has only geographic legitimacy. By the same token, Swanton distinguishes the Upper and Lower Kalispel or Pend d'Oreilles according to location. The former occupy an area in Montana extending from Flathead Lake and Flathead River to about Thompson Falls or Clark Fork of the Pend d'Oreille River, including the Little Bitterroot, southward about to Missoula and northward to the International Boundary. Some wintered on the Bitterroot and a large band at St. Ignatius.

The latter, sometimes called the Kalispel proper, are found in an area extending from Thompson Falls down to Clark Fork, Pend Oreille Lake, Priest Lake, and Pend Oreille River nearly to the International Boundary, as well as in hunting territories along Salmon River, British Columbia. Teit, "The Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateau," p. 5; Swanton, *Indian Tribes of North America*, pp. 394-400.

Not withstanding the fact that the Flatheads are frequently found in association with bands of Pend d'Oreilles, it is clear that the Flatheads constitute a nation which is separate and distinct from others speaking the same language.[5]

Furthermore, the character of the Flatheads is admired by whites as well. So much so that nearly all of them who have lived in the Rocky Mountains for any length of time, have taken Flathead wives as a mark of status.[6]

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[4] The reference is to the Upper Lake and the Lower Lake. The division also served to distinguish the Upper Pend d'Oreilles, who were really Flatheads, from the Lower Pend d'Oreilles. Garraghan, Jesuits of the Middle United States, II, 304.

[5] The name Salish was originally applied to a large tribe in western Montana popularly known as Flatheads, thence it was finally extended to cover all those speaking a similar language. The linguistic family includes northern portions of Washington, northern Idaho, western Montana, a small strip of the northwest coast of Oregon, and in Canada the southeast part of Vancouver Island from Thurlow Island to Sooke Bay, and all the southern mainland of British Columbia as far as Bute Inlet and Quesnelle Lake, with the exception of that portion held by the Kutenai, although within the Kutenai area, at Columbia lakes, there have been small settlements of Salish. Hodge, Handbook of American Indians, II, 415-16.

[6] The union of mountain man and Indian maid marks each chapter of the frontier advance in the nineteenth century. The careers of such men as Peter Skene Ogden, Edwin Denig, John Work, David Thompson, William Bent, John McLoughlin, Archibald MacDonald and John Owen bear this out. Despite the frequency of the union, however, Flathead

Even the more savage nations share this admiration, to such an extent that enemy nations attempt to master the Flathead language in order to make others believe that they are Flatheads and, therefore, brave warriors. Of the rest of their history, we have been unable to determine when the Flathead nation was formed, and even less why, and from

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women were not among the majority. The women of some tribes did indeed have widespread reputations for attractiveness, especially those of the related Cree and Ojibway nations, and a disproportionate number of traders' wives and consorts came from the Lake Superior-Lake Winnipeg area. Saum, The Fur Trader and the Indian, pp. 85, 121.

Patrick Gass in his Journal offers a similar opinion: "To the honor of the Flatheads, who live on the west side of the Rocky Mountains and extend some distance down the Columbia, we must mention them as exceptions, as they do not exhibit those loose feelings of carnal desire, nor appear addicted to the common customs of prostitution, and they are the only nation on the whole route where anything like chastity is regarded." Patrick Gass, A Journal of the Voyages and Travels of a Corps of Discovery (Pittsburgh, 1807), pp. 189-90.

Ross Cox also wrote with praise of the Flatheads: "Their bravery is pre-eminent; a love of truth they think necessary to a warrior's character. They are too proud to be dishonest, too candid to be cunning." Adventures on the Columbia River (2 vols.; Inolo, N. Y., 1832), I, 219. Apparently, their industry left no time for gambling, and the necessity to cooperate precluded quarreling. In their reminiscences of Rocky Mountain life, fur trappers Osborne Russell, Zenas Leonard and Warren Angus Ferris brought their comments on the Flatheads into accord with the other observations by ascribing bravery, generosity and friendliness to them.

Even those who apparently had never seen a Flathead showed a perfect willingness to oblige. James Ohio Pattie's narrative, edited by Timothy Flint at the time that American Christianity was heralding the tawny "Wise Men from the West," went out of its way to mention the Flatheads. Though the tribe did not practice head-flattening, Pattie and Flint understandably assumed that they did, and so pictured them as fine-looking creatures except for their "horrid deformity." Saum, The Fur Trade and the Indian, pp. 99-100.

whence the Flatheads came to this part of America.[7]

Although it does not appear so at first, the Flathead language is in truth very difficult and complicated. Furthermore, it is no way related to European languages. Consequently, for some the pronunciation is an impossibility. One might also say that brevity of expression is carried to an excess. For them one word is in reality a complete phrase. Often the Salish closely combine two, three, and four words with the singular result that the word so composed is often shorter than the simple words which made it up. This presents the greatest obstacle in mastering the language, but it also constitutes a richness in vocabulary unequaled by other languages.[8] The expres-

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[7] In discussing the tribal organization of the Indians on the lower Columbia River, Lewis Morgan makes an observation equally pertinent to the interior Salishan. The large number of petty nations is explained by the constant tendency to disintegration, subdivision and displacement. This tendency, he maintains, is inherent in the institutions of barbarous ages, and continues in force until the institutions of pastoral or advanced agricultural life supplant them. Lewis H. Morgan, "Indian Migrations," p. 188.

[8] In a report delivered before the American Philosophical Society, March 19, 1886, William J. Hoffman, M.D., commented that the Flathead tribe of Indians, one of a group of tribes constituting what may be termed the eastern division of the Salishan linguistic stock, revealed a peculiarity in the terms of relationship which is more than of ordinary interest. For example, changes in discourse are made after the death of an individual because the name of the dead is not spoken aloud in the presence of other relatives. "Selish Myths--Vocabulary of the Selish Language," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, XXIII (1886), 361.

Mengarini's observation regarding the difficulty of sions are truly Oriental. And when it pleases God to grant us proof, the philologists will certainly have material to

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the language re-echoes the complaints of Lewis and Clark:

> "The Salishan tongue, it immediately developed, was a 'gurgling kind of language' . . . it did not in the least resemble any other Indian language that any member in the party had ever heard. So an old notion flickered for a moment in these toughly realistic minds and Lewis conducted an inquiry, making a vocabulary and listening most carefully to this enunciation which was like 'an Impediment in their Speech or brogue on their tongue.' For that moment the expedition flickered on the rainbow edge of fantasy: this language might be Welsh and these Indians, 'light complected more so than Common for Indians,' might be descendants of Prince Modoc. The notion, which would have impressed thousands of devout Celts in the States who knew that the Rocky Mountains were a likely place to find Madocians, flickered out at once."

Bernard DeVoto, The Course of Empire (Boston, 1952), p. 502.

The following entries from the Journals of Lewis and Clark offer additional testimony.

(Whitehouse) THURSDAY 5TH AND 6TH SEPT. 1805

> "These Savages has the Strangest language of any we have ever Seen. they appear to us to have an Empediment on their Speech or a brogue or bur on their tongue but they are the likelyest and honestst Savages we have ever yet Seen. . . . we take these Savages to be the Welch Indians if their be any Such from the Language. So Capt. Lewis took down the names of everry thing in their Language, in order that it may be found out whether they are or whether they Sprang or originated first from the Welch or not."

(Ordway) THURSDAY 5th SEPT. 1805

> "these natives have the Stranges language of any we have ever seen. they appear to us as though they had an Impedement in their Speech or brogue on their tongue. we think perhaps that they are the welch Indians, & C."

DeVoto, The Journals of Lewis and Clark, p. 234.

study.[9]

One might say that these savages actually have four languages. In other words that they speak in four different ways. The first is with simple and separate words as is characteristic of European languages. They use this idiom when conversing with whites in order to be better understood. The second, which is truly their language, is a laconic combination of words. The third, which might be called the familiar tongue, is broken and extremely terse, and consequently difficult to understand. The fourth, which might be called the mute language, is expressed solely with gestures. No one can imagine how impressive it is to watch two men speaking to each other with gestures, often including minute details of great events in these lengthy conversations.[10] Certainly the missionary cannot exempt himself from learning this form of communication since often he must hear the confessions of the deaf, in which case a dozen gestures will serve to exhort the penitent to do as the priest directs.

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[9] Father Mengarini's proposition had absorbed the interest of countless trappers as well. Among those who expressed themselves on the subject of Indian origins, some subscribed to the Judaic theory popularized by James Adair, while others joined Mengarini in holding to the later substantiated position that the Indian had migrated from northeastern Asia. Saum, The Fur Trader and the Indian, p. 29.

Some contemporary anthropologists, after studying blood groups of aboriginal Americans, place them, with the exception of the Aleut and the Eskimo, in a separate race, distinct even from Asian Mongoloids. The American Indian in their estimation is unique because his particular cluster of blood type, along with other traits, is not found in such a combination in other clusters around the world. The incidence of such traits as red-green color blindness and the presence of hair on the middle segments of the fingers is very low. They are rarely bald or have grey hair in old age and they have a high frequency of arches rather than whorls in their fingerpoints. Peter Farb, Man's Rise to Civilization as Shown by the Indians of North America from Primeval Times to the Coming of the Industrial State (New York, 1968), p. 228.

There are many who speak the same language as the Flatheads.[11] In fact, it is the Lkatkoms' cint, also known as the Pend d'Oreilles of the Upper Lake, who speak it in a most regular and unbroken manner.[12] From this mother tongue we have succeeded in providing the Flatheads with the basis of a grammar and a dictionary which is being slowly compiled.[13]

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[10] The Flatheads were particularly noted for their adeptness in using a sign language which was the same as that used by the Crow. Teit, "The Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateau," p. 373.

Several reminiscences of the frontier period contain descriptions of sign language conversations with the Flatheads. According to this sign language, which DeVoto describes as the Esparanto of the plains, the Flatheads were designated by pressing both hands, with the fingertips extended and touching across the head just above the forehead. The origin of the sign is lost beyond recovery, but inevitably it was translated Tetes plattes, or Flatheads. DeVoto, Across the Wide Missouri, p. 10.

Further proof of the widespread use of sign language is offered in the following passage.

> "our guide could not speak the language of these people but soon engaged them in conversation by signs or jesticulation, the common language of all the Aborigines of North America, it is one understood by all of them and appears to be sufficiently copious to convey with a degree of certainty the outlines of what they wish to communicate."

DeVoto, The Journals of Lewis and Clark, p. 236.

Father Rappagliosi makes a similar observation, noting that "the Indians of any tribe have a common language by which they may communicate whatever they wish. It is worth noting that in sign language they are expressive to a degree beyond our belief." P. Fillippo Rappagliosi, Memorie del p. Fillippo Rappagliosi (Rome, 1879), p. 88.

[11] Hodge has identified at least sixteen dialect groups within the Salishan family--eight in the interior

Finally, one might say that the Flathead language is the most important of all the savage tongues in North

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region, and another eight in the Pacific Coast region. The more closely related interior dialects include the following: (1) Lillooet in western British Columbia, (2) Ntlakyapamuk (Thompson Indians) in southwest British Columbia, (3) Shuswap in south central British Columbia, (4) Okinagan in southeastern British Columbia, extending into the United States, the subdivisions of which are the Okinagan proper, Colville, Nespelim or Sanpoil, Senijextee (Snaichekstik) of the Arrow lakes and the Columbia River below the lakes, (5) Flathead in eastern Washington, Idaho, and Montana, subdivisions of which are the Spokane, Kalispel, or Pend d'Oreilles, and Salish or Flathead, (6) Skitswich or Coeur d'Alenes in northern Idaho, (7) Columbia groups in the western part of the interior of Washington, including the Pisquow or Wenatchi, Sinkiuse, Methow, and other local divisions. Hodge, Handbook of American Indians, II, 417.

[12] Several of the reasons for this similarity are offered by Turney-High. First of all, the Upper Pend d'Oreilles are of the Kalispel-Salishan group and, therefore, linguistically related to the Flathead. Secondly, since the two groups lived pacifically together for centuries, their cultures blended to a marked degree, and the dialectic differences tended to disappear. The Flathead Indians of Montana, p. 12.

[13] The fruit of Mengarini's efforts in mastering the Flathead language are: A Salish or Flat-Head Grammar (New York, 1861) and "Vocabulary of the Skoyalpi, Sehitsni and Selish Proper," Contributions to North American Ethnology, ed. by John Wesley Powell (Washington, D.C., 1877), pp. 248-65, 267-83. Mengarini's contribution to the Kalispel dictionary was also appreciatively recognized by its editors. Wilfred P. Schoenberg, S.J., Jesuit Mission Presses in the Pacific Northwest (Portland, 1957), p. 18.

America.[14] With it alone, a traveler not only may journey from the United States to the Willamette, a distance of about four thousand miles, without the necessity of an interpreter. But traveling a great distance to the northeast of this mission, he will find many among the Blackfeet, the Crows, and the Crees who speak the Flathead language.[15] As a result, we might be tempted to say the

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[14] Others added certain reservations to this sweeping statement. On February 6, 1840, Asa Bowen Smith in a letter written to the Reverend David Greene observed: "Respecting those speaking the Flathead language. I am not so well acquainted with their numbers, nor with the extent of their country. It has been said that there are more speaking the Flathead language than there are Nez Perces. This is probably true, but they are scattered over a large tract of country and divided into small tribes speaking the language with considerable variations from each other." Clifford M. Drury, ed., *The Diaries and Letters of Henry H. Spalding and Asa Bowen Smith Relating to Nez Perce Mission, 1838-1842* (Glendale, Calif., 1958), pp. 129-30.

[15] On another occasion Father Joset clearly offers contradictory opinion, observing that the Flathead language is spoken from the Bitterroot Valley in Montana to the banks of the Frazer River in the English possessions though in many very different dialects. He added that the way the Flatheads speak it differs but little. "These three tribes used much to intermarry, for they used to meet together very often for buffalo hunting. It is the reason, too, that the Spokane, who used to be nearly the same, have abandoned their former dialect." "Linguistics of the Tribe," MS, Joset Papers, Box XLIX, Jesuit Archives, Gonzaga University.

In comparing the Coeur d'Alene language to that of the Salishan in another account, Joset admitted that the former was much easier to learn, observing: "The Flathead language is much more difficult; but it is something like a universal language in these parts, being common to the Kalispels, Chaudieres, Coutenays, and Spokans. Almost all the Coeur d'Alenes themselves understand it; you need patience to learn it but are fully recompensed by the abundant fruit which you garner from your labor." This

Flathead tongue serves in this region of the American wilderness as does the French language in more civilized centers.[16]

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letter, written at the end of 1844 or the beginning of 1845, was directed to an unnamed Jesuit in Switzerland. Garraghan suggests that it is very probably an unabridged version of Joset's letter of February 22, 1845, addressed to Father [?] Foiullot, cited in Garraghan, Jesuits of the Middle United States, II, 292, note 134.

[16] Father Modeste Demers offered further evidence that direct communication among the Indians of the Oregon country was facilitated by the use of dialects derived from the Salishan language base. In this regard he observed: "The Chaudieres, Sinpoils, Spokans, Piskos, the Okinagans, the Lake Indians and the Flatheads speak languages so similar that they readily understand each other." He adds: "It would be enough to know one of these languages to speak them all." Bagley, Early Catholic Missions, p. 49.

CHAPTER II

THE RELIGION OF THE FLATHEADS

To begin with, it would be most interesting and intriguing to learn about the Flathead traditions and legends regarding the creation of the world. Except among the elders of the tribes, these traditions are now unknown. Since the savage is concerned with neither the past nor the future, the younger generation completely ignores these stories. Consequently, it appears that if they are not now collected, in a few years they will undoubtedly be lost.

The earth according to Flathead legend is not a sphere, but rather a platform surrounded by water, much like an island in the middle of a lake. The sky is nothing more than a hollow mountain, or as they say, a great lid above the land and the water. Aside from this globe inhabited by man, the Flatheads believe there are many others above, beneath and around the earth. Before its creation, *Skomèlten* (an ancient word for which was later substituted the word *Skpi*, which means mother), a most powerful woman who had achieved existence independently, begot a son without the cooperation of man. This son then undertook to create the heavens, the earth, and man. Having quickly accomplished this, he then chose to live on the summit of the earth to which he gave his name Amòtkan, which literally means: He who sits on the top of the mountain. Meanwhile his mother Skomèlten remained in another land beyond the waters.[1]

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[1] George Gibbs in his lengthy disquisition on Indian mythology suggests:

> "The foundation for the creation myths throughout all the tribes of the Selish race from the Rocky Mountains to the coast, as well as the Sahaptin and Chinook families, seems to be the same. . . . It may be thus stated: The world was originally inhabited by different beings, some of whom are extinct, or converted into inanimate objects, others are represented by the existing brute creation, birds, animals, etc. Many, if not all of these, possessed supernatural powers, which are variously employed, for good or ill according to their dispositions. One of these, who in no way appears to have differed from the rest except in his vocation, gave to the world its present form, fitting it for the habitation of man. On the appearance of the human race, another beneficent being destroyed the giants and demons, who persecuted him (man) or converted them into animals, taught mankind the arts of life and gave him fire."

Ella E. Clark, "George Gibbs' Account of Indian Mythology in the Oregon and Washington Territories," Oregon Historical Quarterly, LVI (December, 1955), 293-325; LVII (June, 1956), 125-67.

Of the creation of mankind, however, there are probably as many stories as there are tribes. The Snohomish say, for example, that their creator Doquebutl first made their country and that of the Skagits, and a man and a woman to each, and in time the world grew and people increased in numbers and divided into tribes. Snohomish were made of the heart of some animal, the Suquamish of the liver, the Clallams of the right hand and arm to the elbow, the Vancouver's Island Indians of the upper arm, the Skagits of the bones, the Klikatats of the feet, and the Indians of the upper part of the Sound of the mouth, accounting for the large mouths they now have. Franz Boas, ed., "Folk Tales of Salishan and Sahaptin Tribes," Memoirs of the American Folklore Society, XI (1917), 1-64; William J. Hoffman, "Selish Myths," Essex Institute Bulletin, XV (January, 1883), 23-40; Louisa McDermott, "Folklore of the Flathead Indians of Idaho," Journal of American Folklore, This Amòtkan was thus regarded as an invisible god, who according to the Flatheads, had many sons although he possessed no wife. It is for this reason that during a hunting expedition when the Flatheads saw white men for the first time, they were convinced that these were the natural children of Amòtkan, and consequently immortal.[2] They continued in this belief until the savage Crows, at that time allies of the Flatheads, were forced to fight the Blackfeet.[3] Among the several whites who were in the Crows' camp and who joined in the battle, one was wounded and died a few days later.

Amòtkan, observing from his mountaintop that man had greatly multiplied and had become most evil and degenerate, attempted to persuade mankind to return to its senses. But

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XIV (October-December, 1901), 240-51; Mengarini, "Indians of Oregon," pp. 83-87.

[2] Although De Smet replaced the term Amòtkan, meaning great spirit, with Kaikolinzueten, in the early 1840s, the term is still used today at times in referring to the President of the United States.

Gibbs analyzes the etymology of the word: Eh mooto, third person of a verb signifying "to sit high." This changed in composition to Ah moto kan, "head" or "mountain." Clark, "Gibbs' Account of Indian Mythology," p. 301, note 11.

According to his research, Teit claims the Flathead still claim that this great good chief makes rain and snow, and makes all go right on earth and in the sky. Teit, "The Salishan Tribes," p. 382.

[3] This is, no doubt, an apocryphal battle based upon the long tradition of war and outrage perpetrated by the restless and aggressive Blackfeet upon the Cree, Assiniboin, Sioux, Crows, Flatheads and Kutenaie. Hodge, Handbook of American Indians, II, 570.

growing angry when man failed to heed him, he caused all men to perish in a general flood in which the waters rose higher than the tallest mountain tops.[4]

These mounting waters loosened an enormous poplar tree and as the flood receded, it was deposited on top of an extremely high mountain situated between the lands of the Kalispels and the Spokan, called Chkolsm (pronounced cecòlsem) by the savages.[5] This tree again took root and grew and it was upon this same mountain near this tree that the savages seeking initiation into the occult came until recently to engage in their fasts and superstitious dances. Last year I had occasion to twice pass over this mountain and found it truly curious to see this single poplar tree in the midst of an immense forest of pine, lurici and sapine tree of which this and other forests are composed almost exclusively.

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[4] In the traditions of several tribes of Washington, the "Deluge" was sent because of the wickedness of the people. Before the coming of the missionaries, the Spokanes, Nez Perce, and Cayuses had their traditions of a flood, and of one man and his wife who were saved on a raft. John Eells, "Traditions of the 'Deluge' Among the Tribes of the Northwest," American Antiquarian, I (April, 1878), 70-72.

Gibbs observed that references to a deluge or general flood of their respective countries seem to be universal among the Indians, but so far as appears, these are connected with the extinction of a former and demon race, not of the present. He wrote:

> "In the account given me by Father Mengarini this is distinctly stated. An allusion to it appears in the Klikatat tale of 'Iosup.' A story was told to me by some Skagits to the following effect. Doquebutl once got angry and made the water come over the country. At the time there was a people living at the mouth of the Skagit River (called Skah-ka-jet). When the flood came they took their canoes and sat there till the water dried up. One of them went up into the mountains to kill wild sheep, all the animals having taken refuge there. He saw one and shot it. The rest had in the mountains been turned into Keloh-samish, of whom mention has been made elsewhere, and they seeing and recognizing him for one of themselves, shot him."

"Gibbs' Account of Indian Mythology," p. 322.

According to Ella C. Clark in her study, the Great Flood, some people say, took place long before the human race was created, back in the days of the animal people. It rained for a long, long time. The valleys were filled with water and the animals lived on the tops of the hills. Some of the animals were saved, but the big animals perished. Indian Legends from the Northern Rockies (Norman, 1966), p. 134.

After the waters had receded, Amòtkan created other men who proved no better than the first. They were twice the size of the others and called themselves Semteùssi.[6]

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[5] Such tree shrines were not uncommon among the Flathead. There was one large pine tree on top of the hill just west of McCarty's Bridge in Hell Gate Canyon on which the Indians hung small articles of bead work, bear claws, strips of red cloth, queer-shaped stones, bunches of white sage, pieces of buffalo scalp, small pieces of bone, etc. There was another such tree, called the Ram's Horn Tree, in the Bitterroot Valley fifty miles above Stevensville.

The objects were hung on these trees as the Indians passed on their way to the hunting grounds and were placed there to invoke the aid of the Great Spirit. Ibid., p. 77; George F. Weisel, "The Ram's Horn Tree and Other Medicine Trees of the Flathead Indians," Montana Magazine of Western History, I (January, 1951), 5-14.

[6] The Indians of this region speak of a number of races of giants. The relatives of the disobedient Semteussi are, no doubt, the giants of the Coeur d'Alene country who stood taller than the tallest tipi. The link between the two legendary figures is validated by the fact that the former were burned to death in a rain of fire, while the latter reportedly bore a strong odor of burning horn. Clark, Indian Legends from the Northern Rockies, p.

Until recently when savages encountered each other near some great basaltic rock, they would say to one another: "Behold the brothers of *Semteùssi*'s arrows." Since this group of men also failed to listen to Amotkan, they were burned to death in a rain of fire.

As a result, a third creation occurred. But because it was even worse than the other two, *Amòtkan* destroyed it with a series of plagues. Finally, *Amòtkan* created a fourth race of men who would also have been destroyed for their evil ways, if *Skomèlten*, his mother, had not intervened on their behalf. The scornful *Amòtkan* finally persuaded by his mother's entreaties, promised man that he would never again destroy the human race.[7]

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The Flatheads also spoke of a race of dwarfs who raised herds of tiny horses which they used for food in winter. They eventually withdrew to the mountain tops where they sleep in old craters. After ages of this kind of rest they have acquired a great deal of spirit power, the Indians claim. *Ibid*., p. 115.

It is interesting to note that as recently as 1930 there were reports that descendants of the *Se mte'use* tribe had come to live with the Flathead at their Jocko Indian Reservation. Teit, "Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateau," p. 323.

[7] A Chinook legend originally mentioned by Gabriel Franchere in his *Narrative of a Voyage to the Northwest Coast of America in the Years 1811 . . . 1814* (Paris, 1819), p. 47, maintains substantially that the *Talipus* (primeval race) created mankind, but left them imperfect, and that an inferior but beneficent being, *Ecannum*, opened their eyes and mouths and taught them the arts.

The benefits of imparting the arts of life and bestowing fire upon the Indians are ascribed in some tales to *Spilyai* or *Watteetash* who was represented as a young man, Until this time there was no sun or moon, and all the earth was immersed in dense blackness. Mankind, consequently called together in council, urged one another to provide light for the world. But each man refused claiming insufficient power to accomplish this. Then Sinchlèp (a species of small prairie wolf), the most cunning and able of all of the animals, arose from the earth and illuminated the world only a little less brightly than the actual sun. Man was incredibly happy.

Unfortunately, however, in those days animals spoke the language of men. Consequently, the wily little wolf involved himself in human affairs by reporting the secret activities he observed from on high. This met with the disapproval of man, who in fact was so disgusted with Sinchlèp's insolence that taking hold of his tail, which was still quite long, he pulled him back to earth. The wolf was then forbidden to ever again create light.[8]

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who was later destroyed by demons. Clark, "Gibbs' Account of Indian Mythology," pp. 299-300.

[8] Legend ascribes another philanthropy attempted by Coyote. In the distant past he attempted to bring the Flathead salmon. But, when part way up the west side of Lolo Pass, he became tired and dropped it, and it flopped back down the Idaho side of the Divide. Lolo Pass, made famous in the journey of Lewis and Clark, bears the Indian name Tumsumcli (no salmon). Weisel, "Animal Names," p. 346.

The faint resemblance between Coyote and Reynard the Fox is reinforced by the tale of the medicine trees. The Indians often tell of Coyote's journey up to the Medicine Tree country between Ross' Hole and Darvy. When Coyote began going down the mountain side, a mountain sheep ran

The crow then took the place of little wolf. But because he was so black, he naturally reflected little light. Unable to endure the heckling of humans, he withdrew, angry and embarrassed.

Finally, *Amòtkan* ordered his son *Spakaní* to illuminate the world. First, however, *Spakaní* desired to travel upon the earth in order to find himself a wife. To this end it is said he introduced himself to the natives of the Upper Pend d'Oreilles tribe. But the savages seeing that though very handsome, he was different from them, refused *Spakaní* entry into their lodgings.

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after him. As they approached a grove of trees at the bottom of the mountain, Coyote ran out to one side. The mountain sheep ran right into the trees, implanting one of his horns in a large tree trunk. Even today it is plainly visible. For this reason the Indians believe it is a tree of "big medicine," to which they offer earrings, beaded mocassins, or whatever, each time they pass. McDermott, "Folklore of the Flathead Indians of Idaho," p. 245.

Nez Perce tradition reveals an equal amount of exasperation with Coyote. The Nez Perce recount that when several persons were suffering from swellings of the body (*Puxstenei*), they sent for Fox to treat them and make the swelling go away. When these persons were nearly well, Coyote asked Fox for permission to help in curing. So Fox let Coyote act as shaman, and the patients grew worse again. This happened several times. Fox would make them better, and Coyote would turn around and make them worse. By and by the sick ones ordered Fox to tell Coyote not to help, because he was not a good medicine man. Herbert J. Spinden, "Nez Perce Tales," in *Folk-tales of Salishan and Sahaptin Tribes, Memoirs of the American Folk-lore Society*, XI (New York, 1917), p. 184.

Winick additionally observes that Coyote is the best known of the North American Indian trickster heroes. Like his worldwide counterparts, he usually displays negative qualities like stupidity and pretentiousness. Charles Winick, *A Dictionary of Anthropology* (Ames, Iowa, 1958), p. 547.

Having thus been rejected by mankind, the son of *Amòtkan* withdrew and quite by chance came across a nest of frogs. He joined them explaining that he had come to illuminate the world, but that first he wished to marry. Since he had had no access to the savages, he now wished to ask one of them to be his companion. One of the frogs was more than happy to become the wife of a son of *Amòtkan*, so jumping upon him with one leap, she attached herself to his cheek. Thus they celebrated their nuptials. The savages seeing *Spakaní* so disfigured unsuccessfully attempted to kill the frog with their clubs. Finally, the frog, more timid than the son of *Amòtkan*, urged her husband to return to the heavens. Immediately agreeing to this, he was transformed into the sun and began to illuminate the earth. But always attached to his face was his frog wife.

To vindicate the insult perpetrated by man, *Spakaní* shrouded himself in a bright mantle so that mankind could not look upon him by day. At the edge of night, however, he would discard his mantle and rapidly cross the waters beneath the earth, reappearing with his frog wife visible to all. According to this legend the sun and the moon are the same in the opinion of the savages, the marks on the moon being nothing more than an immortalized frog. Consequently, in their language both the sun and the moon have the same name of *Spakaní*. When asked how they explained the joint appearance of the sun and the moon, the savages knew not what to answer.[9]

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[9] In another account of this interrogation Mengarini wrote:

> "Then I asked them what they thought when they saw the sun and the moon at the same time during the day. They all started, looked at one another in surprise, looked up, as though searching the sun and moon, then joined in a general laugh, and covered their faces as if ashamed; and one of them, looking at me with only one eye across his fingers, said, 'Well, we were all beasts, and like enough no one of us has ever observed and remarked what you say now.'"

Mengarini, "Indians of Oregon," pp. 85-86. (See Preface, note 2, ante, for variants in Mengarini's two accounts.)

However, Turney-High supports the thesis of the legend as reported by Mengarini, noting that the Salishan term for the moon is "sun of the night." Flathead Indians of Montana, p. 23.

There is also much confusion among the tribes of the Oregon and Washington territories as to the origin of the sun and moon; all the tales clearly spring from a common origin. The Snohomish story, for example, presents evident parallels with the Flathead legend. The moon (sloqualm) was first made, and formerly lived upon the earth, but it was too hot and burnt everything. Consequently, Doquebutl ordered it to go above and be for the night. Its woman asked it where it should go if he ascended, and the moon answered into its face. She entered and the moon went up and stays there. Clark, "Gibbs' Account of Indian Mythology," p. 318.

The Kalispel legend also tells of Coyote's failure, but then offers a variation on the Flathead myth:

> "Two young men in the tribe--nicely dressed young men--were desired by four frogs. The frogs wanted the two young fellows as their husbands but did not know how to get them. One Frog made a plan. She made everything in the forest wet, so that the young men could find only one dry place in which to sit. That was inside the cedar-bark lodge of Frogs. Instantly, one Frog jumped on the face of one of the men and stuck there so fast that he could not remove her. The other Frogs blinded the other young man in one eye.
>
> "When the people tried to help the two men, they could do nothing. The blinded one said, 'I think I should be the sun. I am ashamed to go about as a man with only one eye.' 'I will be the moon,' the other man said, 'I do not want to go among people

Regarding the immortality of the soul, the end of the world, and the reward of the just and evil, the Flatheads also have traditional beliefs. For example, they believe that only half of man dies at one time. In other words, the body which they liken to a cover or a case containing the other half (unnamed in antiquity, but later called Singappèns), will die, but the Singappèns never dies.[10] The Singappèns of the good, journeys to rest with Amótkan, although not knowing what will befall him as he travels there. The Singappèns of the evil-doers travels

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with this Frog on my face.'

"So the people placed the two up in the sky, to be the sun and the moon. The spots we see on the moon are the Frog still sticking to the young man's face. The sun as we all know has only one eye." Clark, Indian Legends from the Northern Rockies, pp. 70-72.

[10] This may be an error in transcription. In Turney-High's Salishan vocabulary the word for the moon is Snakokoane. Flathead Indians of Montana, p. 151.

Father Joseph Giorda transcribed the word as "Sngapeus, meaning the soul (anima); the sole, lining; the soul is so called from the strict union and pervading of our bodies." Giorda, Dictionary of the Kalispel or Flathead Indian Language, p. 148.

The legend perhaps has a thematic relationship to the Blackfoot legend of Poia, or Scarface, who was the son of Morning Star and So-at-sa-ki, a Blackfoot maiden. As a boy he was ridiculed by everyone in his village because of a mysterious scar on his face. Learning that the scar had been placed on his face by the Sun God, he resolved to go to the home of the Sun to have it removed. After living in the Lodge of the Sun and Moon and Morning Star for some time, Poia returned to earth to teach the Blackfoot the secrets of the Sun Dance. Lucille Childears, "Montana Place-Names from Indian Myth and Legend," Western Folklore, IX (July, 1950), 263-64.

to an undetermined place facing no other punishment than to be deprived of the company of Amótkan. By evil-doers, the savages referred to liers and thieves, for to them lying and stealing, if not the only sins, were certainly the most grievous.[11] Because of the Flatheads' abhorence of both lying and thievery (which is not found among other savage nations), they are not only outstanding, but also worthy of admiration among both whites and savages.[12]

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[11] There seems to be greater inconsistency regarding the existence of an afterlife intended for the punishment of evil-doers. The most common belief regarding the afterlife held by most of the Northwest Indians, is that to the West there are two countries of the dead. The Indians remain in the first until their flesh and bones have entirely disappeared, during which time they revisit the earth and are seen by men. After the entire dissolution of the body, they cross the river into the far country and are lost.

There is a Klikatat story, however, which supports the Flathead belief in a place of reward and another of punishment after death. Because of some unnatural conduct by one of his sons, Spilyai decreed that no longer could all the dead go to one place. "Some went up and others went down." Clark, "Gibbs' Account of Indian Mythology," p. 316.

After spending a winter with the Salish, Ross Cox wrote the following description of their religion:

> "The Flatheads believe in the existence of a good and evil spirit, and consequently in a future state of rewards and punishments. They hold, that after death the good Indian goes to a country in which there will be perpetual summer; that he will meet his wife and children; that the rivers will abound with fish, and the plains with the much loved buffalo; and that he will spend his time in hunting and fishing, free from the terrors of war, or the apprehension of cold or famine. The bad man, they believe, will go to a place covered by eternal snow; that he will always be shivering with cold, and will see fires at a distance which he cannot enjoy; water which he cannot procure to quench his thirst, and buffalo and deer which he cannot kill to appease his hunger."

Adventures on the Columbia River, I, 126.

The Flatheads also claimed that the earth and its civilization would someday cease to exist. Upon that last day the dead would live again, and living find themselves in a land created by Amótkan which would be far better than this one. After this time man would die no more.

Despite the power and nobility of Amótkan and Skomèlten, these were not the deities the Flatheads worshipped, although they certainly worshipped Spakaní, the sun. Being very materialistic, the savages paid little heed to that which they could not see. Thus the beaver, the deer, the crow, and other animals of all species were transformed into guardian spirits. Among them all, the little wolf was respected as the most powerful and was most favored by man. As an example of Sincelèp's power and favor the elders recount that long ago there lived upon the earth a group of large fierce men who mercilessly killed all whom they encountered. From their name comes the words for assassin, Natliskèliguten. Sincelèp so took pity upon man that he roamed the earth until he had killed every Natliskèliguten and had transformed each into an enormous stone. Even of late, if while crossing the mountains, the Flatheads came upon a basaltic rock standing upright, they would say to one another, "Keep aside, here is a Natliskèliguten petrified by Sincelèp."[13]

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[12] The Flatheads' code of morals was short, stressing honesty, bravery, love of truth, and love of family. The practice of the opposites would lead the braves to a miserable existence as "shrinking slaves of winter" in a land where fires were forever at a distance and water and game were out of reach. "Beautiful Paganism, Social Order, Noted by Fathers," The Sunday Missoulian (Missoula, Montana), August 24, 1941, p. 4.

Another commentator sums it up by observing that the Flathead code of morals was dictated by the lessons of trial and error. That which was to the best interests of the whole tribe was the guide. They found that each individual should bear his share of the responsibility on the hunt and should do his bit toward the resultant whole. "100 Years of Christianity in Montana," ibid., p. 1.

Gibbs supports this admiration, stating: "Except upon the strongest evidence, it could hardly be believed that the Flathead of the Rocky Mountains, whose virtues approach him more nearly to the ideal savage of romance than any other upon the continent, was the kinsman, if not the progenitor of the Niskwalli." Clark, "Gibbs' Account of Indian Mythology," pp. 163-64.

Yet Ross Cox at an earlier date does not single out the Flathead for their singularly moral behavior. Garraghan, Jesuits of the Middle United States, II, 240, note 8.

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[13] Flathead myths reveal the remarkable familiarity of these Indians with animals and nature. Since they largely depended upon hunting and fishing for subsistence, their folklore is naturally concerned with animals. But aside from the necessity of knowing the habits of game species, the Flathead were naturalists in a more aesthetic sense. Such creatures as frogs, pocket gophers and small birds, which were seldom or never used for food or decorative purposes, often have important roles in their stories. Weisel, "The Animal Myths," pp. 345-55.

The Flatheads also had a curious tradition with respect to beavers. They firmly believed that these animals were a fallen race of Indians, who in consequence of their wildness, vexed the Good Spirit and were condemned by him to their present shape; but that in due time they will be restored their speech. They claim they have heard them talk with each other, and seen them sitting in council on an offending member. Ronan, History of the Flatheads, p. 161.

Often during the night the howls of these wolves can be heard not far from the village. And even today there are some old women who believe that the coyotes come to warn them of advancing Blackfeet. Even more incredible, however, is the claim of some Trochessi who claim that three howls of the coyote heard in their village announces the immanent arrival of some stranger--friend or foe.[14]

The sun cult to which the Flatheads were at one time devoted, is most simple. Before eating, each would take a portion of either meat or roots, and raising it toward the sun as if in offering, would say: "Sun, be so kind as to allow these animals (or roots or fruits) to grow in abundance." Without uttering more, they would begin to eat. In these matters the Flatheads were not as fervent as the Blackfeet,[15] who not satisfied with offering such food to the sun, to this day offer flesh torn from their bodies.[16] Two years ago when a band of Blackfeet visited the village of Saint Mary's,[17] we noticed that one of them bore a symmetrical pattern of scars upon his chest and arms. When asked how he had received these wounds, he answered that he had cut himself, adding with much gravity and devotion, that he had done it in order to nourish Natala, which in Blackfoot language means the sun.[18] The man was not convinced when the missionary attempted to explain the nature

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[14] As with the names of Indian tribes applied by early French and Italian missionaries, the origin may be Latin. The Trochessi may have been identified by some circular decoration or manner of dressing their hair, since the generic term for the flat circular conche shell is "troco." The validity of the interpretation is somewhat more persuasive in light of the fact a circular patty of dried herbal medicine was referred to as a "trocisco" by Greeks, Romans and Arabs in the days of the Empire. Dizionario della Lingua Italiana, ed. by Niccolo Thomaseo and Bernardo Belloni (16 vols.; Turin, 1924), XVI, 202.

[15] The Siksika perhaps received the name "Blackfoot" because of their habit of discoloring their moccasins with the ashes of the prairie fires. It may possibly refer to their black-painted moccasins also worn by the Pawnee, Sihasapa, and other tribes. An important Algonquian confederacy of the northern plains, consisting of three subtribes, the Siksika proper or Blackfoot, the Kainah or

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Bloods, and the Piegan, the whole tribe is popularly known as the Blackfoot.

Until the recent historic period the Blackfoot held most of the immense territory stretching north almost from Saskatchewan to the southern headstreams of the Missouri in Montana. They ranged across this terrain as roving buffalo hunters, dwelling in tipis and shifting periodically from place to place. Hodge, Handbook of American Indians, II, 570.

[16] The event appears consistent with Hodge's observation that human flesh sacrifices to the sun god were not uncommon among the tribes along the Missouri. At the time of the Sun Dance pieces of flesh were cut from the bodies of the participants, offered to the sun, and then placed under a buffalo chip. Variations of this sacrifice included the cutting off of finger joints and slitting the flesh for the attachment of thongs. Ibid., II, 404.

[17] The site of St. Mary's mission was on the right bank of the Bitterroot River, about twenty-eight miles above its mouth, between old Fort Owen and the town of Stevensville. Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 316, note 2.

[18] If this practice of human flesh offerings was exclusively dedicated to the sun god, we must conclude that Natala is actually Napi or "Old Man" who in Blackfoot cosmography was the incarnation of the same idea as the sun. Hodge, Handbook of American Indians, II, 571.

of the sun and of its creator.

For their particular necessities, in their afflictions, etc., etc., each Flathead prayed to the first object appearing before him, even if it would be a tree or a stone. Because of this, one of the oldest Flathead leaders recalled, when he was young, orphaned and poor, he gave way to his sorrow one day. With tears in his eyes he allowed his arms to encircle a large tree, all the while murmuring: "My tree, have pity on me so that I may become a chief, have many horses and much grass to smoke, and that I may overcome my poverty." At the same time an old blind man of nearly one hundred who belonged to the Kalispel nation, but had lived at Saint Mary's for several years, was also asked if he had prayed in his youth. "Certainly," he answered, "in fact, I prayed often. Each morning my mother said to me, 'My son, come to worship.' Then she would lead me into the woods and selecting some tree ravaged by time and nearly petrified, she would urge: 'Now my son, press yourself closely against this tree and pray.' Whereupon I would say, 'Oh, old and ravaged pine, grant me that I may live as long as you.' I would repeat the prayer while my mother did the same nearby.[19] Then

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[19] In another version Mengarini adds:

"Generally, the prayers of our Indians consisted in asking to live a long time, to kill plenty of animals and enemies, and to steal the greatest number of horses possible; and this was the only instance when to steal was not a fault, but a great merit and with shoulders tired and sore we would remount our horses."

Whether directed to the sun or to inanimate objects, Flathead prayers usually consisted of requests to live a long life, to vanquish many animals and enemies, and to be able to possess the horses of their enemies.

Since it often occurred, and in fact still does, that lightening kills both animals and men, it has been regarded as nothing less than an evil spirit; an enemy of the human race. The rainbow, the savages believe, is nothing more than lightening come to survey those it has killed. The Flatheads believed as the heathens still do, that the only way to escape it is to leave immediately and flee elsewhere. In fact, three years ago a tribe of Nez Perce, who lived twenty miles from Saint Mary's, quickly broke camp in the middle of a dark, rainy night and traveled many miles in darkness to escape the dread lightening.[20]

> bravery, since no man could ever hope to become a chief unless he had killed at least seven Blackfeet and stolen twelve horses."

Mengarini, "Indians of Oregon," p. 87.

[20] Such an inclemency, the Flathead believed, was caused if one whipped a snake or disturbed the rest of a night hawk. Anything red attracted lightening, and as thunder was thought to be the cause of lightening, everything of that color was concealed at the first rumble. Furthermore, the leaves of a fir called pam were gathered, dried, and pounded. When it thundered threateningly, people took a little pam powder and scattered it on the fire. The smoke ascended to the clouds and hopefully made weather moderate. Turney-High, Flathead Indians of Montana, p. 25.

CHAPTER III

MEDICINE MEN AMONG THE FLATHEADS

It is a well-known fact that every savage and heathen nation practices magic, whether true or false, never for the good of others, and almost always evil. Magic (the Canadians say "the medicine") existed among the Flatheads who called it Somesch (pronounced [Ms illegible]).[1]

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[1] Turney-High consistently uses the term "sumesh," as approximation of the Salishan term to indicate power in place of "the medicine," maintaining that the Flatheads have a naturalistic pharmacopeia which is not thought of as magical. Flatheads of Montana, p. 27.

The spirit of the somesch consisted of any natural or supernatural entity. It could be a bear, lightning, a lake, a flea, or a dwarf. No spirit had pre-eminence over another; they were all equal. Also, no spirit consistently gave the same power. Usually the power was different and in all cases it was accorded with the status of an individual, so that he or she could use the power. For instance, a man often obtained this somesch, or supernatural power, to increase his bravery in war, but he never would find himself with the ability to assist in childbirth, for men were not tolerated in this particular feminine field. Those who were given powers had to use them whenever they were required or requested, unless the spirit specifically stated that they could not use them. In all cases, songs were given to the searcher, and often a fetish was left for the man. This token was deposited in a medicine bag, and was exclusively the property of the one to whom it had been given. Forbis, "Religious Acculturation of the Flathead," p. 53; Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend, ed. by Maria Leich (2 vols.; New York, 1949-1950), p. 461.

And the men who practiced it bore the name of Tlekiulsch, sorcerer or medicine man. In order to initiate themselves into this art, they traditionally climbed to the top of a very high, often snow covered, mountain. The mountain, which is located directly behind our mission dwelling, is composed entirely of boulders and ferous-like soil abundant in rock crystal.[2] For seven days they remained there, fasting, dancing, and sleeping. The animal who appeared and spoke to them in their dreams between the fifth and seventh days became their guardian spirit. From that time forward the Flathead initiates believed that each time they sang and smoked, their figures besmeared with all sorts of pigments, they would attract their particular guardian spirit who would reveal his presence by singing with them.[3] He would then proceed to enlighten them, ex-

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[2] The imposing mountain just opposite became St. Mary's Peak. Stout, History of Montana, I, 149.

[3] The connection between shamanistic practice and song is noted very early in the literature concerning the Flathead. One of the first descriptions is that given by Warren Ferris for the period 1830 to 1835; although he was generalizing about "The Rocky Mountain Indians" in this particular passage, he knew the Flatheads well and doubtless drew upon them, as well as upon others, for the following:

> "These medicine men also forewarn them of coming events, and profess to cure them of their diseases, by wearing the skin, assuming the characters, imitating the voices, and mimicking the actions of bears, and other animals; accompanying their demonaic capers by discordant yells, and deafening sounds, extracted from a kind of drum by violent thumpings, alone sufficient, one would image, to frighten away

plaining that for which he had been called. Whether these spirits be false or real, it is very possible that in many circumstances the devil intervened at least in part.

> both the demon of distemper, and the spirit of the afflicted together. . . . At least they may claim the merit of performing, without any fees, all the various ceremonies of their profession; their only reward being the esteem of their companions, and a more extended influence."

Warren A. Ferris, Life in the Rocky Mountains, 1830-1835 (Salt Lake City, 1940), p. 234.

The Rev. Samuel Parker, who passed through the Flathead area in the period 1835-1837 on his way to Protestant missionary activity farther West, reported that among their superstitions is their mode of curing diseases.

> "They have what are called medicine men, who make no pretensions to any knowledge of diseases or skill in medicine, but they have a bag in which is deposited various relics. The patient is stretched upon the ground; a number of persons encircle him and sing the medicine song. The medicine man enters the circle and commences his magical incantations by holding the medicine bag over him, which is to operate as a charm; he uses many gestures, grimaces, and inarticulate sounds; pats or kneads the patient with his hands, beginning very softly, and gradually increasing to a considerable degree of severity; blows into his ears, and practices other like ceremonies. By this process the patient is often much fatigued, and thrown into a free perspiration, and his imagination is much excited. When the friction has been sufficiently employed, the imagination well wrought upon, and the medicine bag has invisibly imparted its virtues, the medicine man presents some trifling article, such as small bone, a stick, or pebble, and says he has taken it from the body of the patient, and that it was the cause of the disease; or he gives a heavy puff upwards and says the disease has come out of the patient and gone upward, and then asks him if he does not feel better. . . . The medicine man stands responsible for the life of his patient; and if the patient dies, not infrequently his own life is taken by some of the relatives of the deceased. He makes a heavy charge for his services, often a horse . . ."

Samuel Parker, Journal of an Exploring Tour Beyond the Rocky Mountains (3rd ed.; Ithaca, N. Y., 1842), pp. 240-241.

Many events preceding the arrival of the missionaries, if true, make it difficult not to believe that there was some diabolical fraud. Two such recent event~~s~~ are worth reporting. One morning a few weeks after the missionaries had settled among the Flatheads,[4] into their tent came Old Paul, respected by all as one of the first leaders. Because of his great age he had been baptized the year before.[5] Through his interpreters he told us that on his way to visit his horses that morning (he was going south from Saint Mary's), he had heard someone repeatedly calling him by name. Not seeing anyone, he continued his walk, until hearing himself called again, he lifted his gaze and saw a crow, which flying very close to him said: "You are going to visit your horses, for you do not realize that at this very moment the Blackfeet are stealing your people's horses at Squtpkéin" (a place called the Gate of Hell by the Canadian about twenty-five miles north of Saint Mary's).[6] Returning immediately to warn the missionaries, Old Paul was persuaded not to give credence to the crow's ominous message.

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[4] On September 1, 1841, nearly four months after their departure from Westport, the missionary party met an advance group of four Flathead chiefs. On October 18, 1841, the group reached the Bitterroot, the location of their first reduction, after "a journey of four and a half months on horseback through the desert, and in spite of our actual want of bread, wine, sugar, fruit, and all such things as are called the conveniences of life . . ." Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 304, 315.

[5] Long Face or Big Face, an Indian who had been left an orphan as a youth, but who had without the benefit of family ties achieved the distinction of becoming head chief, was baptized by De Smet at the age of eighty and had been given the Christian name of Paul. John Killeen, S.J., "St. Mary's Mission, Stevensville," MS, Jesuit Archives, Gonzaga University, p. 2.

In describing the first meeting with Chief Big Face in 1840 Father De Smet recalls his patriarchal air and his cordiality, saying: "Black-robe, you are welcome in my nation. Today the Great Spirit has fulfilled our wishes." No doubt the chief's fervor as well as his great age prompted De Smet to baptize him during that first visit, for each morning it was Big Face who at daybreak would ride his horse up and down the camp, rousing the 1,600 villagers for the first instruction of the day. Finally, after fifteen days of instruction when De Smet promised a medal to the first who could recite the Ave, Pater, and Credo without error, the old chief rose and said: "Father, your medal belongs to me." He had mastered his task with zeal and perseverance for he recited without an error. Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 223-26.

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[6] Hell Gate Canyon was within the traditional domain of the Flathead Indians, who claimed the territory eastward from the Bitter Root Mountains to the headwaters of Clark Fork on the Continental Divide. At the beginning of historic time their permanent camps were in the Bitterroot Valley, west and south of the canyon, but they made seasonal use of the Hell Gate in hunting and gathering and as a route for periodic excursions to the buffalo plains. The canyon is actually a fifty mile passageway by which the Clark Fork of the Columbia River, flowing between the Garnet and Sapphire ranges, reaches the Missoula Valley from the Deer Lodge and Silver Bow valleys to the east. Its narrow mouth is flanked by mounts Jumbo and Sentinel, which rise steeply to a height of some 2,000 feet above the valley floor. Gillet Griswold and David Larom, The Hell Gate Survey (Missoula, 1954), pp. 1-5.

Control of the canyon was attempted by the Blackfoot and Gros Ventre, whose favorite ambush localities were the narrow defile just within the mouth of the canyon and the gulch at Marshall Creek, three miles east. The resulting battles gave the Hell Gate its name. With the coming of the white man, the pioneer passed through Hell Gate while traveling the overland route later known as the Mullan Road. Later both the Northern Pacific and the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad traveled through this pass. Owen, Journals and Letters, p. 4.

In truth, however, the next day a young man came from the Gate of Hell to report that the morning before the Blackfeet had indeed stolen twenty-three horses. We later learned that the crow had been Old Paul's guardian spirit before his baptism.[7] The good old man, despite the crow's insistent pursuit, had renounced him long ago.

Later we marveled at the lore Old Paul claimed to have learned from this guardian spirit. Without any other study or additional effort, Paul had learned from the crow the use of herbs and medicinal roots useful in curing a variety of ailments. These herbs and roots exist in the Flathead country today, and as we will discuss later, they are effective medicines.

Four years ago another leader who had always behaved as well as a savage can be expected to, sadly came to tell the missionary that for three nights he had been unable to sleep. As soon as he would lie down he would hear singing from above similar to that of the animals who serve as guardian spirits to the medicine men or in other words the shamen.[8] Since he could not escape and was unable to

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[7] Such an experience would not be considered unusual even in contemporary Flathead culture. The occasions on which contact is made with the supernatural are more varied than is usually indicated in the literature on the Flathead. Such occasions include the formal vision quest, dreams in an otherwise normal context, surprise encounters at unpredictable times though apparently always when the person or persons sharing the experience are isolated from others, and in what seems to be a relatively extended learning situation. It may be noted in passing that although the Flatheads report numerous experiences with ghosts, using the word in its Western sense, these are experiences of a clearly different nature, not involving the acquisition of power--they are unfortunate and unpleasant experiences not desired by the Flathead. Merriam, Ethnomusicology of Flathead, p. 7; Alan P. Merriam, "Music of the Flathead Indian," Tomorrow, IV (June, 1956), 103-07.

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[8] Mengarini here describes shamanism in its formal sense which is based on the theory that a spirit outside the individual takes possession of him and that he thereafter operates only when motivated by the spirit. The practice existed not only among the American Indians, but also the inhabitants of Siberia. Winick, Dictionary of Anthropology, p. 481.

A peculiarity of the practice among the Flathead was that although the shamanistic power could never be sold, it could be transferred by parent or elder close relative. After public announcement of the bequest the medicine bundle would be surrendered in some secluded place where the youth would also be taught the song of his guardian spirit. Turney-High, Flathead Indians of Montana, p. 28.

Mengarini described the system in other words in his "Narrative of the Rockies."

> "Let no one suppose that medicine among the Indians was, as among ourselves, a lawful product of human skill and science, or that it was a mere deception, and 'medicine men' mere deceivers. Medicine was of two kinds: medicine against disease, and medicine against the accidents and misfortunes of life. These were to be remedied or averted by the intervention of their tutelary genius. The methods of obtaining medicine was the following: When an Indian had arrived at the age of manhood, he departed alone to the mountains, and there tasted neither food nor drink for six or eight days. Dancing was necessary for obtaining medicine. When all was over, his genius appeared to him under the form of some bird or beast, and taught him how to procure the medicine. Each Indian kept the nature of his medicine a profound secret, used it only for himself and family in sickness, and carried it about his person in battle, to charm away the arrows of his enemies. Medicine against sickness was oftentimes a real natural remedy, and such as a wise physician would have prescribed had he been there."

Partoll, "Mengarini's Narrative," p. 20.

The Flathead were not alone in worshipping a parsleep, he passed the night reciting numerous rosaries. He was urged to ignore the song, and to protect himself by holding a crucifix, turning it in the direction from which the song came. But with all this, the voice was merely subdued for awhile. Nor was he free of this nocturnal musician when he ordered him to leave in peace and instead go to the missionary where he was welcome.

The women, particularly the elderly, have also been trained in medicine. But all their art which they acquired without guardian spirits and without much fasting, consisted in curing the ill by blowing upon their bodies and making some gestures as if to throw out the malady.[9] The savages, however, have been so long-suffering and generous that they would give these hags a horse each time they

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ticular divinity. The Nez Percé spoke of a "spirit power" equivalent to the Tamahnous or Tamahnawais of the Chinooks. These are animals, birds, etc., prayed to for material aid, as for instance as a hunter bathes, he invokes the eagle to aid him in pursuit of game. Clark, "Gibbs' Account of Indian Mythology," p. 304.

[9] Obviously, Mengarini here refers to the village shaman whose two principal outward and visible acts of shamanistic curing were blowing and sucking noxious materials from the place affected. The difference between his power and that of an ordinary person was one of degree. Turney-High, Flathead Indians of Montana, p. 304.

Later, in the first decade of the twentieth century, Curtis commented that illness was combatted by a treatment consisting of singing and either blowing the disease away with the breath or sucking it out with the lips. Curtis, The North American Indian, VIII, 83.

would blow upon a sick man.[10]

It has been impossible to get anything more out of their mouths regarding the particulars of this superstitious and perhaps diabolical art. They are most ashamed to speak of it.[11] What offers great consolation is that no recognizable vestige has remained since the arrival of the missionaries. But from this has developed a problem which directly concerns the missionary. Since all the efforts of the savages had been directed toward living a long life on this earth, their greatest concern was to secure a guardian spirit for themselves, and to learn from him all the secrets which would lead to a cure of their infirmities.[12] It is for this reason that the Canadians gave this particular individual the name of medicine man. The system is universal among all the savage nations.[13] Now that they are abandoning their superstitions, consequently their medicine, which in many cases consisted _of anything but roots and herbs_, they expect the missionary to satisfy the need, while savages adopting Christianity will not abandon their guardian spirits if they are not convinced that the missionaries are much more practitioners of medicine than they. The savages, as a result, call the Catholic priests _the men of high medicine_. Therefore, a missionary who seeks entry into a savage nation without possessing medicines, or worse yet, having no knowledge of them, would have no better reputation among the savages than the uninitiated to whom the _Tlekuisch_ give the appelation _Ikueu_, which means as much as dunce or dullard.[14] This is so important that in areas where the Protestant ministers have long been established, the savages cannot obtain medicines without paying a great price and are consequently still immersed in all their ancient superstitions. The facts are too abundant and too persuasive to be contradicted.[15] Those [circumstances] would make me stray too far from the subject before me. Even worse, in saying it I would make queasy not only the Catholic but also the honest Protestant, and at the same time call a blush to the cheeks of those ministers of the Gospel. Now, to finish this article, it is absolutely necessary that a missionary have some knowledge of medicine, that he have some with him, that he knows how to bloodlet. So among the articles to send to a savage mission, a copy of The Medicine should have first place.[16]

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[10] De Smet's description, written in December 1841, is remarkably similar:

> "Conjurers are found here as well as in some parts of Europe. They are a kind of physician. Whatever may be the complaint of the patient these gentlemen have him stretched out on his back, and his friends and relatives are ordered to stand around him, each one armed with two sticks of unequal length. The doctor or conjurer neither feels the pulse nor looks at the tongue but with a solemn countenance commences to sing some mournful strain, whilst those present accompany him with their voices and beat time with the sticks. During the singing the doctor operates on the patient; he kneels before him, and placing his closed fists on the stomach, leans on him with all his might. Excessive pain makes the patient roar, but his roarings are lost in the noise, for the doctor and the bystanders raise their voices higher in proportion as the sick man gives utterance to his sufferings. At the end of each stanza the doctor joins his hands, applies them to the patient's lips, and blows with all his strength. This operation is repeated till at last the doctor takes from the patient's mouth, either a little white stone, or the claw of some bird or animal, which he exhibits to the bystanders, protesting that he has removed the cause of the disease, and that the patient will soon recover. But whether he recover or die, the quack is here as elsewhere rewarded for his exertions . . . I received this description of their method of curing diseases from a clerk of the Hudson Bay Company.

De Smet, Letters and Sketches, with a Narrative of a Year's Residence Among the Indian Tribes of the Rocky Mountains (Philadelphia, 1843), pp. 300-01.

As Wissler calls it, this trick is common to the whole new world except in the regions of highest culture and among the Eskimos. The only variations provided in other culture clusters are the use of the tube in sucking out the cause of the disease and the use of the calabash in which the bulb is fashioned of rawhide in the bison areas not far distant from the Flatheads. Wissler, The American Indian, p. 203.

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[11] Later ethnographers could have warned Mengarini that it is almost impossible to gather an accurate compendium of somesch dreams and rituals (which have often been acquired by Indians under conditions of torture). Turney-High adds that only the completely acculturized or unreliable are willing to discuss the matter. Flathead Indians of Montana, p. 28.

[12] Especially among the warlike tribes, practically every individual at least once in his lifetime followed a ritual of fasting, torture, and prayer according to his tribal convention in order to evoke the visitation of a guardian spirit which usually appeared in the form of an animal. During the meeting, secret instructions were imparted by the guardian spirit including the song of invocation which among the Flathead is used in gambling and love, as well as at times of crisis. Wissler, The American Indian, pp. 206-07; Merriam, Ethnomusicology of the Flathead Indians, p. 12; Verne F. Ray, Historic Backgrounds of the Conjuring Complex in the Plateau and Plains (Menasha, Wis., 1941), pp. 27-43.

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[13] Others have made similar points about the Flathead vision quest, including Teit, Turney-High and Curtis. It is interesting and even significant that Curtis, in a novel about Flathead Indian life, used the vision quest as the climax of the story and emphasized the role of song in the quest. Edward S. Curtis, _Indian Days of Long Ago_ (Yonkers, N.Y., 1915); Turney-High, _Flathead Indians of Montana_, p. 27; Curtis, _North American Indian_, XXVII, 220-21.

Teit adds: "Most, but not all, Flathead insist that a song is always conveyed by the guardian spirits, and almost all such experiences told to the writer do include learning a song or songs." "The Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateau," p. 384.

[14] Point concurred with this emphasis upon the necessity of basic medical knowledge. _Wilderness Kingdom_, p. 163.

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[15] The Reverend Henry H. Spalding factually contradicted this accusation in a description of his medical work contained in a letter to a friend, Dr. [?] Allen of Kinsman, Ohio, on February 18, 1842:

> "I am no physician, but have more or less sickness to look after, sometimes eight or ten cases on my hands at once, usually bowel complaints caused by eating bad food or too much of it. . . .
>
> "In the winter, however, there are many cases of lung complaint occasioned by bare feet in the wet and snow, which often terminates in consumption and death after a lapse of a few years. Blood letting is a favorite remedy among them, and I often go by the lot, opening five or six at a time and go about more pressing business, leaving them to stop the blood when they please."

Clifford M. Drury, Henry Harmon Spalding (Caldwell, Idaho, 1940), p. 173.

[16] Considering Mengarini's background and the period of time in which he was writing, it is reasonable to assume that the reference is to La Medicina omiopatica considerata nel suo vero aspetto e in modo adatto alla commune intelligenza (Milan, Italy, 1838). (Translation: Homeopathic medicine considered in its true aspects and presented in a manner adapted to laymen.)

CHAPTER IV

FLATHEAD CUSTOMS

There is something curious about the name each savage bears in his own language. In part it is a result of the magic already discussed. With the exception of a few who were given ancestral names at birth, the names carried by the adults are not the ones given at birth, when each was named after the first object the mother touched after delivery. One was thus called head of a bull, another drywood, a third old shoe, and a fourth sand, since these were in fact the first objects their mothers viewed.[1] These names remained with the children until they became medicine men at which time they assumed the name of the guardian spirit who had appeared to them, and thus acquired such singular nicknames as white raven, red fox, and half wolf, and who knows what else.[2] These they never changed except in the most extraordinary circumstances. For example, one of the most courageous braves in the tribe carries the name of bear track because during a successful attack upon the Blackfeet he entered their camp to spy on their comings and goings night after night, crawling with the four paws of a bear attached to his hands and feet. At dawn the

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[1] The reader will readily perceive the inconsistency. Mengarini first states that the name is based upon an object the mother touches. In the following sentence, however, he claims that the name is based upon the first object viewed by the mother. Little discussion of this ritual is evident among anthropological sources since the totemic names assumed at puberty and the name of the clans and gentes within the tribe are both more permanent and more indicative of culture pattern. Wissler, The American Indian, pp. 174-75.

[2] According to Mengarini in another account:

> "Many researchers have devoted themselves to this curious ritual. They agree that the methods of obtaining medicine were the following: When an Indian had arrived at the age of manhood, he departed alone to the mountains, and there tasted neither food nor drink for six days or eight days. Dancing was necessary for obtaining the medicine. When all was over, his genius appeared to him under the form of some bird or beast, and taught him how to procure the medicine. Each Indian kept the nature of his medicine a profound secret, used it only for himself and family in sickness, and carried it about his person in battle, to charm away the arrows of his enemies. Medicine against sickness was oftentimes a real natural remedy, and such as a wise physician would have prescribed had he been there. But this apparent good served only as an excuse for the superstitious use of it against the evils and dangers of life."

Partoll, "Mengarini's Narrative," p. 201.

More recently Turney-High has emphasized much the same set of practices including the vigil in the wilderness, preparation by bathing and fasting, choosing a spot famous for medicine experiences and construction of a low wall of stone in which the suppliant lies down to "fast, wait, and pray for the guardian." But he adds two major points to the previous discussions of the Flathead vision quest. Regarding the appearance of the guardians, he admits that they usually appear in theriomorphic form, rattlesnake and bear being the most usual, but anthropomorphic guardians also appear as dwarfs, as peripatetic decomposed corpses, or the spirit of some ancestor. Flathead Indians of Montana, p. 27; James Teit, The Salishan Indians of the Western Plateau, pp. 382, 384.

Blackfeet paid no heed to the tracks, nor did they discover the trick until they found that many among them were dead.

Today the children receive a single Christian name at baptism to which we add the father's savage name according to the custom of white men.[3]

Perhaps it has already been noted that among heathen nations, when a man dies the others gather around the corpse during the night to chant their medicine songs. And when burying him the next day, they surround him with all he owned at the time of his death--blankets, shirts, handkerchiefs, high boots, arrows, his gun, etc., etc., so that they may serve him during his travels in the other world. The man's horses are also slaughtered at the gravesite. On occasion even the wives kill themselves in order to be buried with their husbands.[4] Upon the urging of the whites

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[3] The baptismal register maintained by Father Nicolas Point between September 29, 1846 and Easter, 1846 provides examples of the Christian names conferred upon the converted infants. Typically French names including Francoise, Monique, Marguerite and Colette are listed along with such Latin names as Perpetua and Euphrasia. "Register of Baptisms and Marriages Administered in the Land of the Blackfeet," September 29, 1846 to Easter, 1847. Mont. Sax., Vol. 1, Fol. VIII, p. 1, GASJ.

[4] An excerpt from the Journal of the Rev. Samuel Parker would suggest that equal reverence was extended to women as to men. He wrote:

> "The night of our arrival (in the Nez Perces' country) a little girl of about six or seven years old, died. The morning of the twelfth they buried her. Everything relating to the ceremony was conducted with great propriety. The grave was dug only about two feet deep. They have no spades, and

this custom has been abandoned by the Flatheads during the last few years. Now nothing of the past remains but the night-long vigil during which they alternate the recitation of prayers, especially the rosary, with the singing of hymns as they circle the corpse. The vigil is not only attended by the dead man's relatives, but also by all the others who can find space in the small tent. Here they remain until the end of the day. If it should happen that a married person dies, the surviving partner immediately sheds the clothes and ornaments he is wearing, and dresses

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> a sharpened stick was used to loosen the earth, and this was removed with the hands; and with their hands they fill up the grave after the body is deposited in it. A mat is laid on the grave, then the body wrapped in its blanket with the child's drinking cup and spoon, made of horn; then a mat of rushes is spread over the hole and filled up, as above described. In this instance they had prepared a cross to set up at the grave, most probably having been told to do so by some Iroquois Indians, a few of whom, not in the capacity of teachers, but as trappers in the employ of the fur companies, I saw west of the mountains."

Thus, in one of the earliest written records there is already evidence of the Christianizing influence of the Iroquois. Parker, Journal of an Exploring Tour, pp. 275-76.

Another more recent description of the Flatheads offers a clear example of the assimilative process in action. The writer having observed a Flathead funeral several decades later notes: "When an Indian has breathed his last, all gather at the rude log cabin and partake of what poor fare the bereaved parents or the widow can offer. Then, in the hoarse gutturals of the Kalispel, rise the death songs, hymns of Christ and the sorrowing Mother, hymns of loss and of anguish . . . written by Blackrobe Giorda when the mission was young." Arthur D. Spearman, S.J., "Flathead Pray for Dead," The Indian Sentinel, V (Fall, 1925), 180.

himself in the dirtiest, shabbiest clothing he can find. These he does not change until the passage of one year when he once again puts on his ornaments and remarries.[5]

Hunting and warfare are as common here as in any other savage nation. Since we have often spoken of these practices in various letters, there are no additional particulars to include, except to say that the Flatheads' bravery and aptness in war has always rendered them as formidable opponents to their enemies, whatever nation they might be.[6] But what is worthy of admiration and demonstrates their magnanimity is the fact that the Flatheads never indulge in war unless repeatedly provoked, in which case they have never failed to victoriously deploy their small numbers against the largest enemy camps. Treachery is unknown among them. They have always had the greatest abhorence for it, even though they themselves have often been its victims. It is remarkable that where every other savage nation after killing an enemy removes his clothing, scalps him, and concludes with a lascivious dance, the Flatheads, even before the missionaries came, were contented to take the fallen man's arms and horse, never touching his clothes, much less his body.[7]

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[5] Even into this century the Flathead pursued a ritualized mourning period characterized by abstinence and isolation for an absolute minimum of one year. Unlike the Plains Indians the Flatheads vigorously deny ever having sacrificed fingers or joints for the dead; the only mutilation suffered, according to them, was the cutting of the hair by some elder member of the tribe. Turney-High, Flathead Indians of Montana, p. 145.

[6] In another account Mengarini provides a rather colorful vignette illustrating this widespread admiration of Flathead military prowess. While traveling with some companions, including Gabriel Prudhomme, Mengarini noticed the sudden appearance of a man wearing a two-horned head dress who asked to be led to the Flathead camp. The spokesman, a Frenchman, Pierre Chouquet, who had been living with the Blackfoot and had fought against the Flatheads the day before, announced before the camp: "Your warriors, Father, are truly glorious. The Blackfeet, though five times their number, have been utterly defeated, and mourn twenty-four killed and about forty wounded." Partoll, "Mengarini's Narrative," p. 266.

But along with these and other fine moral qualities including hospitality, even extended toward enemies; a horror of theft and lying, vices innate in other savages; generosity, justice, etc., which distinguish the Flatheads from all other nations; there reigned over them a forest of vices.[8] Among these were hatred, revenge, jealousy, insubordination, obstinacy, gluttony, gambling, sloth, incontinence, disregard for the education of their children, murder, suicide, and others we can presume of heathen savages. Recently the elders have explained to me that one angry word was sufficient reason for a woman to immediately hang herself from a tree, or a man to kill himself with arrows. As a result, the elders estimated that a homicide or a suicide occurred every six days.[9] Men

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[7] Some students of native lore maintain that Indians cautiously observed certain rituals upon the death of an enemy. For example, killing of an enemy in the darkness presaged his consignment to eternal darkness. Richard I. Dodge, Our Wild Indians (New York, 1959), p. 180.

On the other hand, there is a hint that some violence was perpetrated upon the body of the enemy by the Flathead if the obvious inference is drawn from Father De Smet's following observation: "The Flatheads have abolished the barbarous custom of reeking vengeance on the generosity so far as to give sepulture to all who die among them." Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XXVIII, 417.

The Flatheads proudly maintained, however, that up to the early 1840's they had never shed a drop of white man's blood. In fact, this proud tradition led Charlot, Chief of the Flathead tribe, to refuse the proferred hand of friendship offered by Looking Glass, one of the Nez Perce leaders of Chief Joseph's rebel band. With contempt, he explained, "that a Flathead . . . had never shed the blood of a white man." Lawrence B. Palladino, S.J., "Historical Notes on the Flathead," The Indian Sentinel, I (Fall, 1919), 15.

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[8] Although De Smet looked askance upon the Flatheads' nonacceptance of what might be referred to as European culture traits and values, he found much to praise:

> "They are scrupulously honest in their buying and selling, they have never been accused of having committed a theft; everything that is found is taken to the lodge of the chief, who cries the articles and returns them to the owner. Slander is unknown even among the women: lying is hateful to them beyond anything else. . . . Quarrels and fits of rage are severely punished. No one suffers without his brothers interesting themselves in his trouble and coming to his succor; accordingly, they have no orphans among them. They are polite, always of a jovial humor, very hospitable and helpful to one another in their duties."

Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 222.

[9] Although no figures are available to corroborate Mengarini's observation, Turney-High agrees that suicides were fairly common in the old days. "People committed suicide for any number of reasons: chagrin, love, or just weltschmerz."

The Indians say that the threat of suicide was not an uncommon way of disciplining relatives, husband, or parents. Should a person be granted his wish he would commit suicide out of spite. People did not censure suicides. A person merited only sympathy if he should be depressed or unfortunate enough that he would cut himself generally had but one wife, but they changed them as casually as another might change a pair of shoes which hurt his feet.[10]

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off before his time. Turney-High, The Flathead Indians of Montana, p. 148.

[10] Though Mengarini inveighed against the polygamous structure of Flathead familial relationships, and De Smet was angered by the frivolity with which they viewed marriage, Turney-High underscores the dual economic and status value of multiple marriage to the Flathead. Wife-lending or wife-exchanging was incomprehensible to the Flatheads, but under the sororate system, a man claimed sexual rights with his wife's sisters if he took them also as wives publicly before the tribe. The Flatheads thus drew a clear distinction between concubinage and the marital relationship.

Since plural wives required more lodges and more maintenance, a wealthy man might have two or more. As the superfluity of women increased as a result of losses in warfare and as they became more useful in processing the buffalo on the hunt which they joined with the arrival of the horse in 1725, plural marriage also became a practical capital enterprise. Ibid., pp. 89-96.

CHAPTER V

THE CALL TO RELIGION

Such was the level of morality among the Flatheads almost until the arrival of the missionaries in 1812.[1] They had already seen the first whites among them. But from them they received injury instead of assistance. The whites would offer them strong spirits in order to make them drunk, then they would rob them of as many beaver skins as they had. These were Americans.[2]

Several whites who had first visited these villages as beaver hunters employed by the American Company in 1828, left it to join the Flatheads.[3] They were Ignatius called the Large Peter and another Ignatius called the Small to distinguish him from the first. All three were Iroquois, and called whites simply because they spoke French.[4] With

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[1] Burns notes that as early as 1810 "several men of devout and even proselytizing temper came into separate contact with the Indians of the Flathead region." Indians and Jesuit Wars, p. 14.

An additional number of early influences are noted by Thompson C. Elliot, "Religion Among the Flatheads," Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXXVII (March, 1938), 1-8; John C. Ewers, "Iroquois Indians in the Far West," Montana Magazine of Western History, XIII (April, 1963), 2-10.

[2] Mengarini's judgment may have been affected by the knowledge that in the initial exchange of beaver skins with David Thompson of the Northwest Company in 1809, the Indians' main concern was in exchanging their lances and arrows for firearms. Thus in the following winter Thompson gave them twenty guns and several hundred iron arrowheads, in exchange for their valuable beaver skins. Ewers, Gustavus Sohon, p. 16; DeVoto, Course of Empire, p. 536.

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[3] Perhaps the Iroquois arrived among the Flatheads later than 1814. According to Bishop Rosati's diary, the two Flatheads of the 1839 deputation reached the Flathead country from Canada in 1816. Ross Cox, an employee of the Northwestern Fur Company, who was among the Flatheads early in that year and left an account of their religious beliefs and their enthusiasm for Christianity. Garraghan, Jesuits of the Middle United States, II, 238, note 7.

According to Shea's account some Iroquois of Caughnawaga joined the Flatheads, "and the tribe became Christian in heart early, conforming as nearly as they could to the doctrines and even religious practices of the Church, daily offering up their prayers to the Father of mercies, and sanctifying the first day of the week in his honor." Shea, History of the Catholic Church in the United States, 1529-1854 (4 vols.; New York, 1886-1892), III, 382 ff.

But the actual date of migration is even more uncertain in light of Palladino's estimate which places it between 1812 and 1820. Indian and White, pp. 9-10. At one point De Smet cites the date as 1816. Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 20.

The earlier date seems realistic in terms of an initial settlement of Iroquois for in 1810 David Thompson employed six Iroquois at Saleesh House near Thompson Falls, in order to assist him in constructing birchbark canoes. These may have settled among the Salish, or returned to Caughnawaga and persuaded others to visit the Bitterroot Valley. David Thompson, David Thompson's Narrative of Explorations in Western America, 1784-1812, ed. by J. B. Tyrrell (Toronto, 1916), p. 418.

[4] As a result of numerous later references it is a fairly well supported fact that these Iroquois came from the St. Lawrence Valley and had received Catholic instructions at the mission at Caughnawaga. Ewers, Sohon, p. 18.

The firmness of their commitment to the faith is impressive since they had, no doubt, received no priestly instruction since the Suppression. The last Jesuit in Canada, Father Louis Cazot, had died in 1880 and no Jesuit was active in Canada until Father Pierre Chazelle arrived in Montreal from Kentucky in 1842. Campbell, "Father De Smet," p. 6; William I. Kip, Early Jesuit Missions in North America (New York, 1866), provides a background which explains the survival of Catholicism among the Iroquois.

Ignace soon married into the Flathead tribe; he taught the Flatheads to say the Lord's Prayer, make the sign of the Cross, and to observe Sunday as a day of rest. They did not hunt, fish, trade or move camp on Sunday. Each Sunday they assembled to listen to the moral teachings of their leader. The service was interspersed with singing and dancing in a great circle after the fashion of the older, native prophet dance. The remainder of the day was a secular holiday in which the Indians indulged their love of horse racing, the hand game, ring game and other gambling delights. Ewers, "Iroquois Indians in the Far West," pp. 2-10.

Apparently, the leader of the group which settled and intermarried with the Flathead was Ignace Lamousse (Shonomene), also known as Old Ignace or Ignace the Large, so called to distinguish him from his compatriot of the same name. Turney-High, Flatheads of Montana, p. 43.

Along with the others, Ignace had been, no doubt, in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company until the destruction of the Great League. Having thus traveled from the region of Montreal to Montana, living with the Blackfeet en route, he settled with the Flatheads. "Apostle of the Iroquois who Brought Faith to Indian," Montana Catholic Register, Western Edition (Helena, Montana), August, 1941, p. 4, copy in Jesuit Archives, Gonzaga University.

If Garraghan is correct, Mengarini and Joset differ as to the initial religious influence. Speaking of the Flatheads, Garraghan writes:

> "Their first notions of Christianity were derived, if Joset's account be correct, not from Catholic but from Protestant sources. In 1826 a party of three Indian youths, a Nez Perce, a Spokan and a Coeur d'Alene, travelled to the Red River settlement in the present Manitoba and lived there for some time, meanwhile receiving instruction from Protestant clergymen of the place in fundamental Christian truths. The Coeur d'Alene died at the Red River, while the two others returned to their tribesmen. The Spokan was especially zealous in communicating his new-found knowledge and many even of the Coeur d'Alenes were drawn to listening to him. When news of the arrival of the black-robes among the Flatheads reached the Coeur d'Alenes they forthwith dispatched

them was an aged Canadian called Jean Baptiste Gerve, as well as a creole.[5] Each was a Catholic.

When they had mastered the essentials of the savage tongue, they began telling thousands of things about the customs of the white settlements. They also gave the Flatheads their first instructions regarding the true God and our Holy Religion. From then on the Flatheads began to distinguish good from evil. Ignatius the Large could be considered the first the Lord used to dispel the murky darkness that until then had shadowed the minds of our savages. His words along with his honest conduct, characteristics most difficult, and I would say almost impossible to find among whites who live with the savages, appealed to the hearts of many, especially the elderly who passed not only days but often entire evenings in the tent of this precursor, so to speak, in order to hear him speak of God and of his religion, but above all about Baptism.

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messengers to St. Mary's petitioning to be allowed to share their ministry.
Jesuits of the Middle United States, II, 314.

[5] When referring to the Creole, Mengarini was undoubtedly designating Gabriel Prudhomme, a mixed blood, but an adopted child of the Flathead nation. He was the first to meet the missionary contingent on the banks of the Green River. Subsequently he was often to serve as interpreter for the missionaries. Crittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 292.

Jean Baptiste Gerve is Jean Baptist Gervais. Garraghan, Jesuits of the Middle United States, II, 238, note 8.

It was then that the Flatheads heard reference made to certain white men dressed in black who instructed people in the knowledge of God and all good things and who made man live after death. Whenever Ignatius spoke with the savages (Old Gerve recently observed), he usually ended by saying: "And my friends all that I say is nothing. If those dressed in black should come here they would know, for it is from them that I learned all of this which I tell you." The Flatheads wished that Ignatius would teach them some prayers, but this he steadfastly refused for fear of changing the words of God.

By a fortuitous act of Divine Providence, the efforts of Ignatius the Large aroused in the Flatheads a great desire to have such men among them. But they did not dare speak, not knowing what to do to obtain them. One day when as usual Ignatius was engaged in religious conversation with them, the Flatheads asked: "Why do not those Black robes of whom you so often speak also come among us?" Ignatius did not let this question pass, but immediately answered: "And you. Why do you not seek them? You will find them in the lands of the Soiapi (the Americans) and I am certain that they would come if you would but seek them." At which point he turned to the chief, who at this time was Old Peter (who died in 1841 and of whom we spoke in letters written that same year), and implored him to send some representatives of his tribe to St. Louis in search of Catholic missionaries.[6] As a result, he dispatched four Flatheads on this mission in the spring of

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[6] Old Peter had been among those twenty-four Iroquois trappers who, having learned their Catholic teachings at the Caughnawaga Mission near Sault St. Marie, subsequently instructed the Flatheads. Because of his great age, he had been baptized and given the name Simon Peter during Father De Smet's first visit. So ancient was he, De Smet wrote, that even when seated he needed a stick to support himself. But the missionary added: "Yet he had no sooner ascertained that we were on our route to join the tribe than mounting his horse and mingling with the young warriors who were prepared to go forth to meet us. He said: 'My children, I shall accompany you; if I die on the way, our Fathers, at least, will know the cause of my death.'"

With whip in hand, it was Old Peter who urged his youthful followers forward at the rate of fifty miles a day. Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 291.

Having been taught the rudiments of the religion of the Black Robes or Long Gowns which the Flatheads called the "high medicine," and which they felt would assure them temporal immortality, "the assembled council of the tribe proposed sending a deputation to St. Louis to request a missionary." Edward J. Devine, Historic Caughnawaga (Montreal, 1922), p. 330. Thomas A. Jessett offers an extensive disquisition on the Anglican claim to the term Black Robe in "Origin of the Term 'Black Robe,'" Oregon Historical Quarterly, LXIX (March, 1968), 50-56.

Saum underscores a point which somehow lessens this reported triumph.

> "Being creatures of self-interest, the natives often approached religion in a thoroughly pragmatic fashion. According to traders, they considered the missionary's bestowal of Christian blessings as tantamount to success in field and battle. When given the acid test and found lacking, Christianity lost its attraction and the missionary appeared as an impotent herald of a meaningless creed. The Indians then eschewed Christianity and reverted to their traditional beliefs."

The Fur Trader and the Indian, p. 241.

The importance of the "medicine" purportedly distributed by these missionaries is also stressed in a report made after their arrival in the 1840's. Wrote the old mountain man Thomas Fitzpatrick, now a United States Indian agent at Bent's Fort on the Arkansas River:

> "The missionaries had started with baptisms and the

1830. Along with three Nez Perce they safely reached Independence, a city located along the United States frontier about three hundred and fifty miles from St. Louis.[7] But when they attempted to resume their trip after remaining there for several days, they all fell ill. Within a few days two Flatheads and two Nez Perce died.[8] The other

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> Indians, thinking the ceremony some great 'medicine' which will render him invulnerable or produce some good luck, will submit to the ceremony with a good grace, until they find that those who have passed through all the ceremonies of religion, have no better luck in hunting and war, than they had before, come to the conclusion that the white man's 'medicine' is not so strong as his own, and therefore loses all faith in the white man's 'medicine.'

Thomas Fitzpatrick to Thomas H. Harvey, October 19, 1847, Upper Platte Agency File, 1847-51, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

[7] The actual distance between Independence and St. Louis is 224 miles but following the meanderings of the Missouri River at that point would make the distance considerably greater. J. Paul Goode, Goode's World Atlas (10th ed.; Chicago, 1957), p. 79.

[8] The first deputation which sought to secure the "White Man's Book of Heaven" arrived in St. Louis in October 1831. Ewers, Sohon, p. 56.

But some years later Lucien Fontenelle of the American Fur Company told Marcus Whitman that four Indians in the 1831 delegation had traveled with him. If so, they arrived in St. Louis earlier than October 1, the generally accepted date of their arrival. DeVoto, Across the Wide Missouri, p. 131.

There is still a question as to the composition of the delegation. Very likely the quest was a joint enterprise involving both Flatheads and Nez Perce. Forbis, "Religious Acculturation," p. 46.

In contrast, Captain Mallet insists that after careful and extensive examination, the Indians who visited St. Louis in 1831 were not Salish of the Flathead nation, but Nez Perce of the Sahaptin nation, and that their visit was not for religious, but rather for worldly considerations.

In further discussion, Mallet adds that the register three losing heart turned back. During the journey the remaining Nez Perce died, and the two Flatheads returned to their tribe having achieved nothing by their expedition.[9]

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of burials of the cathedral at St. Louis shows that "one of the Indians, Narcissus Keepeellele, or Pipe Bard of the Nez Perces tribe of the Chopoweck nation, called Flatheads, aged about forty-four years, who came from the Columbia river beyond the Rocky Mountains, was buried in the Catholic cemetery on October 31st, 1831, Rev. Edmond Saulnier officiating; and that the other, Paul, Indian of the nation of Flatheads, was buried in the same cemetery on November 17th, 1831, Rev. Benedict Roux officiating." Origin of St. Mary's Mission, p. 192.

According to another account of the ill-fated misadventure, Black Eagle, the Nez Perce war chief, died on October 31, but first Father Saulinier baptized him into the faith whose "medicine" he had come in search of and then buried him in the Catholic cemetery. Man of the Morning, the Flathead, died soon afterward; Father Roux baptized him and gave him Extreme Unction and he too was buried in the Catholic cemetery. DeVoto, Across the Wide Missouri, p. 14.

The real answer lies in the official documentation still available. One of the Indians, described in the Old Cathedral burial register as "Keepeellele ou Pipe Bard du Nez Perce de la tribu de Chopoweek Nation apelle Tetes Plates age d'environ quarante ans," died October 31, 1831. The other, Paul, "sauvage de la Nation des Tetes Plates venant de la riviere Columbia au dela des Rocky Mountains," died November 7 following.

Indeed, the evidence would suggest a combined delegation drawn from allied tribes. Garraghan, Jesuits of the Middle United States, II, 237, note 6.

[9] The details of the visit were summarized in a letter written some three months later by Bishop Rosati. On December 31, 1831, he added to a rather edifying story, describing the beauty of the character of the group's religious ceremonies and their familiarity with Catholic ritual. Garraghan, Jesuits of the Middle United States, II, 237.

In a letter to Father General John Roothaan, written on October 20, 1839, Bishop Rosati again outlined the efforts of the Flatheads to secure the ministrations of a Catholic priest:

"Eight or nine years ago (c. 1831) some of the Flat-

Although the Flatheads were disappointed to say the least, stouthearted Ignatius the Large announced to all that he himself would go. This he did two years later.

But before this second expedition two noteworthy events occurred in the Flathead village. Information regarding the Flathead expedition had not only been received by Monsignor Rosati, Bishop of St. Louis,[10] but also by the

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head nation came to St. Louis. The object of their journey was to ascertain if the religion spoken of with so much praise by the twenty-four Iroquois--the two Iroquois neophytes who settled among the Flatheads were accompanied by twenty-two other warriors who settled in the country between the Rockies and the Pacific Ocean--was in reality such as was represented, and above all if the nations that have white skin (the name they have given to Europeans) had adopted and practiced it."
Rosati to Roothaan, cited in ibid., II, 249.

[10] Of this expedition Bishop Rosati wrote some years later, providing certain embellishments and additional information. In his account he contended that after living with the Flatheads for eighteen years, Ignace La Mousse called "Le Vieux Ignace" started for Canada with his two sons in order to have them baptized. Upon hearing that there were priests in St. Louis, he changed his course and headed toward the banks of the Mississippi. The two boys, one of them aged only ten years, were instructed and baptized by the Jesuit fathers at their college and received the Christian names of Charles and Francis Xavier (see below). After going to confession, he received the promise from Bishop Rosati that missionaries would be sent to his people as soon as possible. Ibid., pp. 246-47.

Francois Saxa, with his brother Charles, accompanied their father, an Iroquois known as Old Ignace, to St. Louis in the fall of 1835, to request missionaries for the Flatheads. The Fathers baptized both of the sons. The three returned to the Flatheads. Old Ignace or Aneas, as he was sometimes called, was killed by the Sioux on August 7, 1837, while on the way east to again urge the cause of the Flatheads for missionaries. Francois Saxa was sometimes known as Francois Lamoose. He lived in western fathers of our own company,[11] and most probably also by Protestant missionaries. Consequently, one day during the spring following the expedition, a Protestant minister appeared before the Flatheads and their allies the Nez

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Montana and died in 1919 at the age of 97. Partoll, "Mengarini's Narrative," p. 196, note 9.

All the Catholic writers, according to Mallet, gave the year 1834 as the date of the visit of "Le Vieux Ignace" to St. Louis. But a baptismal record at St. Louis University also establishes the date as 1835 in the following entry:

> "1835. 2 Decembris Carolus & Franciscus Xavierius filii legitimi Ignatii, Partus Indiani ex Tribu vulgo Flatheads solemniter baptizati fuerunt.

Quoted in Mallet, Origin of the Flathead Mission, p. 194.

[11] At the Kickapoo Mission Van Quickenborne was informed as early as 1836 of the Flathead desire for a Catholic priest. He wrote thence to some unknown correspondent:

> "In that country, so I am told, the Flathead nation, after receiving instruction from a Canadian doctor, observes a number of Christian customs, for example, the keeping holy of Sunday and the prescribed fasts and abstinences of the Church. They have asked for a Catholic priest to instruct them in religion. With them are also living a great number of Algonquins and Catholic Iroquois come from Canada. They have married in that country and would like to have their marriages blessed and their children baptized. In spring they come together in a sort of fair (rendezvous) to make purchases from one another for the whole year. Then they scatter to live in family groups. Every year a steamboat leaves St. Louis to penetrate into the heart of these Mountains, taking only three months to make the journey up and down. We regard it as an indispensable duty to profit by this occasion to send some one of Ours to encourage these good dispositions, until such time as we can do more in their behalf."

Van Quickenborne to [?], cited in Garraghan, Jesuits of the Middle United States, II, 239, note 8.

Perce with whom they were encamped.[12] Convening all the men of the two nations together and placing himself in the center, he announced that he had come to instruct the savages and to remain with those who chose to keep him. Ignatius the Large, who had already explained to the Flatheads the difference between the Catholic missionaries and the Protestants, remained to hear what his followers would say. But they did not show themselves eager to answer. After all, the minister had already indicated his willingness to remain with the Nez Perce, who noting the silence of the Flatheads, accepted him among themselves. Ignatius the Large was so pleased with the behavior of the Flatheads that after the assembly was dismissed, he embraced one after the other thanking them for conducting themselves so well, and promising that he himself would go in search of the Black robes.

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[12] Nearly two years after the departure of the two companions to their home in the Upper Columbia Basin, a sensational account of the visit of the Flatheads was furnished to George P. Disoway by William Walker, the exploring agent of the Wyandotts. The story appeared in the Christian Advocate of New York, the principal organ of the Methodist and Episcopal churches. The substance of the account was that a deputation of Flathead chiefs had come in search of the "true god" about whom they had heard from an adventurer attending one of their idolatrous feasts. He told them of the Great Book which contained the wisdom of the "Great Spirit."

It was to their friend General George Rogers Clark, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, that they turned to in St. Louis. He explained what he could do. Unfortunately, only two members of the delegation survived the journey and were able to carry the news homeward.

Upon reading the account, Wilbur Fisk, president of Wesleyan University, sent out a plea for missionaries to the supplicant Flatheads. The response was phenomenal. Flathead mission societies sprang up as far away as Connecticut. Reverend Myron Eells, A History of the Indian Missions of the Pacific Coast (New York, 1882), p. 18.

As a result, missionary parties were organized by several groups. The Presbyterians were soon accepted by the Nez Perces, first meeting with them from June 23 to July 12, 1838, when they were gathered in a colorful assembly of trappers and mountain men, known as the annual rendezvous. The Reverend Mr. Henry H. Spalding opened a mission for Indians at Lapwai in 1836. Spalding with his wife had come from the United States to Oregon with Marcus Whitman and his bride in 1836, the two women being the first Americans of their sex to cross the Rocky Mountains. Dr. Whitman settled among the Cayuse at Waiilatpu near the Walla Walla River. Garraghan, Jesuits of the Middle United States, II, 245; Drury, Smith and Spalding, pp. 67-68; George L. Coale, "Ethnohistorical Sources of the Nez Perce Indians," Ethno-History, III (Summer, 1956), 246-55; (Fall, 1956), 346-60.

In the autumn of that same year it also befell that a young savage of the Spokan tribe who several years before had been taken by the American to be educated in the United States!!!, returned or rather was returned to his own people with instructions to minister to the savages of all the adjacent tribes.[13] Since he feared that because of his youth he would not succeed, his father assumed the burden of this important mission, not hesitating to communicate to all the allied nations the great knowledge which his son had received from the Americans. Unfortunately, he appeared among the Flatheads during the absence of Ignatius the Large who was then living with the Snakes.[14]

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[13] This could be a reference to the sending of two Spokane boys, Pelly and Garry, and later others to the Red River settlement and school of the Hudson's Bay Company. Drury, "Oregon Indians of the Red River School," p. 53.

On the other hand, the mention of the United States suggests the return of two Spokane Indians in the company of Dr. Marcus Whitman to upstate New York in 1835. "Annals of Kansas," pp. 45-46; L [?] Van Ree, S.J., "The Spokane Indians," The Woodstock Letters, XVI (October, 1889), 354-63.

This is supported further by Hafen and Ghent's observation regarding the 1835 homeward journey undertaken by Dr. Whitman and two Indian boys in the company of Thomas "Broken Hand" Fitzpatrick, adding that "Whitman with his two Indian boys went on to his old home in upstate New York, to seek recruits." Hafen and Ghent, Broken Hand, p. 116.

Thus he fervently began to preach to the Flatheads from morning till night, saying that from his son who had returned from the lands of the Americans, he had learned that it was true that after death there was another life. But that to achieve it, it was absolutely necessary to have at least two wives, that all good whites who wished to save themselves did thusly. Furthermore, they should be careful not to allow into their lands certain men dressed in black having no wives, because they were very cleaver and also dishonest. To the Americans alone could they entrust themselves. Heeding them, they would be saved. But those who pursued the creed of the Black robes would be irredeemably consigned to the fire. They should also be aware of the many evils committed by these Black robes. For example, when a man died they pretended to bury the body in a wooden casket displayed before the people, but in reality they ate him. This they did with all their dead. In the United States when a Black robe attempted to bury a body, the Americans threw themselves upon the casket, breaking it into pieces. Instead of finding the corpse within, they found a coffin filled with sand. These and many other great doctrines and revealations were the standard theme of this herald of satan. This demonstrated to the Catholic missionaries how much the enemy of good worked to prevent the propagation of Christ's reign upon earth, and to retain in his infernal clutches the souls which he had so long held in his possession.

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[14] It is safe to assume that Ignatius frequently visited other tribes as he continued to convert the Indians. During his 1835 visit to St. Louis he reported to Father Ferdinand Helias, S.J., that seven nations had asked him to bring back a priest, namely the Flatheads, Nez Perce, Pantheres, Kootenais, Spokane, Cayuse, and Ochazeres. Garraghan, Jesuits of the Middle United States, II, 247.

In the meantime the elder Spokan, not satisfied addressing the people as a congregation, often entered the individual tents of the savages to further persuade each to conform to the doctrine of the enlightened whites. He even urged the leaders to acquire three women so that they would be even more uplifted. This diabolical strategy made an immense impression upon the minds of a large part of the tribe. Believing all which this emissary of infernal propaganda uttered, particularly with regard to polygamy, the Flatheads surrendered to his persuasions. A few men of good sense, almost all of whom were chiefs, and the people who had most faithfully attended Ignatius's instructions refused, however, to submit to the Spokan and persisted with constancy in their monogamy. Thus they were forced to endure the ridicule of this manifest demon.

From them we have learned the facts and heard the criticisms and evil spoken against the Catholic missionaries and their religion, as well as hearing of the praise for the Americans and their easy, benevolent religion. The Spokan had already departed when Ignatius the Large returned to the Flatheads, and by the greatest providence of God, the Creole, of whom we have spoken, accompanied him. Since he was an American, he could dismiss the many lies advanced by that scoundrel Spokan. Ignatius the Large often employed him to dissuade the Flatheads from this new system they had adopted. But the evil had already established a foothold.

As a result, a kind of schism was formed at that time. The Flatheads divided into two religious groups, one calling itself the Followers of Ignatius the Large and the other, the Followers of the Spokan.[15] Thus they remained until the arrival of the missionaries about nine years after this infernal machination.

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[15] The Spokane Chief Garry, it was reported, had been sent when a boy to the Red River settlement in Manitoba at the direction of Sir George Simpson. There he remained several years to be educated. He could speak English fluently, and French nearly as well. He was also proficient in Chinook and in sign language. Teit, "Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateau," p. 370.

Ignatius the Large then resolved to go himself to the United States, and not to stop until he had reached the feet of the Monsignor Bishop to ask for missionaries. In fact, the following spring he began the journey in the company of three Flatheads, one American, and one Nez Perce. They were well along on their journey when Ignatius the Large discovered tracks apparently belonging to the Sioux, a group to whom he could not prudently entrust himself. When he attempted to leave the trail, however, in order to avoid them, the American insisted that they not make a detour. They traveled no more than a mile, however, before they encountered the members of the entire Sioux camp, who running in groups and shouting according to their savage custom, forced the small band to a halt. One of the chiefs asked the American to which tribe his companions belonged. He, we know not for what end or intention, answered that they were all Snakes. The chief then advising the American and Ignatius to stand aside, fell upon the Indians in order to kill them. Ignatius, however, was not as civil as his American mentor, and he leaped to the defense of his companions. But in a few moments all were killed, and the American, in spite of the fact that he was to one side, received a bullet in his head and fell unconscious, immersed in his own blood. He learned at his own expense that a lie is never profitable. While the corpses were being stripped, the American regained consciousness and claimed that the slaughtered Indians were not Snakes but Flatheads. Upon learning this the Sioux were so filled with remorse that they were on the verge of slaying the American until one of their chiefs declared that having attempted to kill him once, they should not try again. They thus allowed him his life, and he eventually returned among the Nez Perce where he now lives, bearing the shame and remorse of having caused the death of innocent men with a lie.[16] Thus did Ignatius the Large offer his life for the sacred cause of religion and as a martyr to charity.

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[16] According to Gray, the party may have been made up of Old Ignace, three Flatheads and one Nez Perce, or perhaps three Flatheads, one Iroquois, and one Snake. At any rate, "the party reached Ash Hollow [Nebraska], where they were attacked by three hundred Sioux, and, after fighting for three hours, killed some fifteen of them, when the Sioux, by means of a French trader then among them obtained a parley with Gray and his traveling companions. . . . While the Frenchman was in conversation with Gray, the treacherous Sioux made a rush upon the three Flatheads, one Snake, and one Iroquois Indian belonging to the party and killed them." Gray, History of Oregon, I, 173.

DeVoto observes that Gray does not list the party by name in his account. Whether there were five or six Indians depends on the identity of the one called Big Eneas. When first mentioned he is identified as a Flathead; five pages later in the History of Oregon he is an Iroquois guide. If Eneas was actually Ignatius, the quasi-Flathead Iroquois, the number of the group would have been five. DeVoto, Across the Wide Missouri, p. 423, note 24.

Gray's account of the actual killing of the Flathead party which traveled with him is as follows:

> "The party reached Ash Hollow, where they were attacked by about three hundred Sioux warriors, and after fighting for three hours killed some fifteen

His son Francis, a youth of twenty-four who for many years served as interpreter for the missionaries, walks in his father's footsteps, always loyal to the faith and most attached to the missionaries, a hardworking man and an

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> of them, when the Sioux, by means of a French trader [Joseph Papier] then among them, obtained a parley with Gray and his traveling companions--two young men who had started to go to the States with him. While the Frenchman was in conversation with Gray, the treacherous Sioux made a rush upon the three Flatheads, one Snake and one Iroquois Indian belonging to the party, and killed them. The Frenchman then turned to Gray and told him and his companions they were prisoners. . . ."

Gray, History of Oregon, I, 173.

But again, another version of the encounter is offered by Indian agent and Flathead historian Major Peter Ronan, who wrote:

> "Of course the whole party of Flatheads, including the Iroquois, and the Nez Perces Indians were slain and scalped after a desperate fight in which Mr. Gray, young Ermintinger, and others of Gray's party, took a hand in defense of the Flatheads. Gray was shot in the forehead, and exhibited the bullet wound to the writer in the winter of 1883, while on his way east with the Oregon pioneers, over the Northern Pacific railroad. The Sioux warriors contented themselves by making prisoners of Gray's party, whom they kept in captivity for a short time with view of putting them all to death, as several Sioux were killed in the fight, and the son of the chief fell by the hand of Gray. Better council prevailed, however, and Mr. Gray and his companions were permitted to depart, and, as stated before, that gentleman is still a citizen of Astoria and wrote and published a history of Oregon."

Ronan justifies this deception by explaining that at the time the Flatheads and Sioux were at war with each other. By claiming to be Snakes they would be assured safe passage. Historical Sketch of the Flathead Indian Nation, p. 26.

It should also be noted that Bishop Rosati's erroneous reference to the death of Ignace La Mousse on his return to the Rocky Mountains from St. Louis obviously disagrees with this account. Rosati to Roothaan, cited in Garraghan, Jesuits of the Middle United States, II, 249.

example to the savages.[17] Not withstanding the freshness of his age, he has already offered proof of his constancy and extraordinary magnanimity despite the fact that his father was slaim by the Sioux and last years his mother was killed by the Blackfeet. His wife died this winter. His three children died a year after their baptism, and he himself remained suspended between life and death for five weeks. In addition to these calamities, the Blackfeet have robbed him of his horses for which he had paid his entire savings.

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[17] In 1903 Francois Xavier Saxa (meaning Iroquois), or Lamousse, the son of Big Ignace who accompanied his father to St. Louis, was still living near Arlee, Montana. Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 292, note 3.

CHAPTER VI

THE COMING OF THE BLACKROBE

The Flatheads much saddened not only by the failure of the first two expeditions,[1] but also at losing the assistance and counsel of a man from whom they had received the seeds of Christian morality, thought no more of under-taking an expedition. But since God had not challenged their faith without intending to reward them later with more abundant graces, He thus inspired the other two Iroquois, Peter and Ignatius the Small, to try again. They discussed the project with the chief, stressing that they desired no native companions. Good and prudent Peter had already developed a plan and had decided not to undertake such a trip without being absolutely certain of at least reaching St. Louis. Since the sad experience of his predecessors had shown him that it was dangerous to stop on the way, once within the confines of the United States and even more dangerous to travel in small numbers, he decided not to pause en route unless in the company of a strong brigade and never to stop in a city encountered in passing because of the diseases prevalent in these settlements.

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[1] Mengarini, though writing at a date when events in question were no doubt fresh in the memory of the tribe, confuses the various Flathead delegations. Actually, they were four in number as is correctly stated by De Smet. Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 290; Bancroft, History of Oregon, I, 54-55; Garraghan, The Jesuits of the Middle United States, II, 238, notes 7 and 8; a fuller version of the account is found in Palladino, Indian and White in Northwest, pp. 237-38, 242-50.

Further proof is offered in the following account: "The fourth embassy of two Indians was at last successful. One went home directly amidst all the hardships of winter to announce the coming of the Blackrobes, while the other followed in the spring as the guide to Father Peter De Smet." George Finnegan, S.J., "Quest of Indians for the Blackrobe," The Tablet (n.d.), Jesuit Archives, Gonzaga University.

Of the fourth delegation, the third to reach St. Louis, Bishop Rosati wrote:

> "These savages, who speak French, have edified us by their truly exemplary conduct and interested us by their conversations. The Fathers of the College have heard their confessions, and today they approached the holy table at high mass in the Cathedral Church. Afterwards I administered to them the sacrament of Confirmation. . . .
>
> "They will depart tomorrow; one of them will carry the good news promptly to the Flatheads; the other will spend the winter at the mouth of Bear River, and in the spring he will continue his journey with the missionary whom we will send them."

Rosati to Roothan, St. Louis, October 20, 1839, Annals, XII, 276-77.

A propitious opportunity presented itself in 1839 when a large company of American beaver hunters, who had been living for sometime in the native villages, passed through on their way to the United States.[2] Peter,

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[2] Peter Gaucher (Left-hand Peter) and Young Ignace who formed the fourth delegation left home in the summer of 1839. According to Palladino, they joined a group of Hudson's Bay Company men about to make the voyage to St. Louis by canoe. Their course most naturally lay down the Yellowstone and Missiori rivers. In passing St. Joseph's Mission, at Council Bluffs, they stopped to confer with the priest in charge and by remarkable coincidence met Father De Smet. Indian and White in the Northwest, p. 27.

It should be noted, however, that as early as 1811 and 1812 groups belonging to the Northwest and Pacific Fur companies had entered western Montana and northern Idaho, Ignatius, and a young Nez Perce joined the group and arrived hale and hearty in St. Louis at the end of autumn.[3]

On behalf of the Flatheads they requested missionaries of Bishop Rosati and of the Provincial representative Verhagen.[4] In the following spring they were assured that a Father of the Company would visit them. Ignatius remained at the novitiate of Florissant[5] throughout the

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and thus, either of these groups could also have been en route to St. Louis. Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 19-20.

[3] The four emissaries who finally reached St. Louis included a Flathead named Man of the Morning, a distinguished Nez Perce named Black Eagle, and two young men of the same tribe named No Horns on His Head and Rabbit-Skin Leggings. The two young men were sketched by artist George Catlin, appearing as plates 207 and 208 in his Letters and Notes (2 vols.; New York, 1842), II, 207-08; DeVoto, Across the Wide Missouri, pp. 12, 391.

[4] Peter Joseph Verhaegen was the first president of (new) St. Louis College, 1829-1836, and vice-provincial of the Missouri mission and vice-province from 1839 to 1843; administrator of the diocese of St. Louis in the absence of Bishop Rosati, 1840-1843; provincial of the Maryland province, 1844-1847; president of St. Joseph's College, Bardstown, Kentucky, 1847-1851; and pastor at St. Charles, Missouri, 1851-1867. Davis, "Years of Preparation," p. 183, note 48.

The request posed a perplexing difficulty to the Jesuits as Father Verhaegen noted: "Considering the very great scarcity of priests among us I scarcely knew what to answer. Finally, after weighing the matter carefully and asking the opinion of the consultors, I promised them that next spring two Fathers would undertake the journey to that distant region." Verhaegen to Rosati, November 8, 1839, cited in Garraghan, The Jesuits of the Middle United States, II, 250.

[5] On Monday, June 2, 1823, a party of twelve Jesuits, De Smet among them, reached property near the historic Franco-Spanish village of St. Ferdinand de Florissant which had been set aside for the Jesuits according to agreement

winter, and later became the guide and interpreter of Rev. P[eter] de Smet.[6]

Peter, seeing that he had achieved all the desired objectives, hesitated no more in exposing himself to danger: he carried the happy news to the Flatheads. With no companion but the Nez Perce, and with no provisions, he departed immediately. Although it was necessary to travel all winter, he was undaunted by the danger of dying from hunger and cold. In order to avoid falling into the hands of savages they were forced to pass, the two often detoured from the regular route and frequently were lost. The Nez Perce could not long sustain the hardships of the trip; consumed by exhaustion and hunger, he died.

Peter continued his journey living on an occasional wild root which he pulled with difficulty from the frozen, snow-covered ground. Soon after his horse also perished. Peter now found himself alone and on foot, without any provisions to sustain life, and still a great distance from

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between Bishop Louis de Bourg and Father Charles Neale, the Jesuit superior of the Maryland mission. On March 25, 1823, the Jesuits had accepted the land in return for transferring seven of their novices to the bishop's New Orleans' diocese. It was to be their new novitiate. Davis, "Years of Preparation," pp. 179-80.

[6] Peter arrived on Eight Mile Creek in the Bitterroot to announce the good news at about the time that Father De Smet left St. Louis, March 27, 1840, with young Ignace on his way to the Rockies. "Left-Hand Peter's Hazardous Winter Journey With News," Sunday Missoulian (Missoula, Montana), August 24, 1941, p. 2.

the Flathead village. Although he had a gun, he had been so reduced by haggard exhaustion that he no longer possessed the strength to hold it to his shoulder. Pursuing the animals in order to slay them was even more out of the question. In April, as a result of God's protection, he finally reached the Flatheads.[7] Barefoot, almost naked, and so transformed that he was hardly recognizable. Overjoyed and ignoring his condition, and before taking food as is the usual savage custom, he reported that the heads of the Black Robes had listened to his requests and that Ignatius had been retained in order to return shortly with the missionary.[8] In fact, in the summer of that same year,

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[7] Although Ignace served as guide and the original interpreter for De Smet, the Canadian trader Gabriel Prudhomme immediately became his factotem as well as interpreter. Burns, Jesuits and Indian Wars of Northwest, p. 15.

Later De Smet wrote enthusiastically of another interpreter, John Baptiste de Velder, "a good Fleming and an old grenadier of Napolean," who, according to the Father, had spent the last fourteen years in the mountains hunting beaver. Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 34, 54.

[8] Ironically, the missionary was to be De Smet who had first met the group at St. Joseph's mission at Council Bluffs. In the company of Young Ignace, his guide, De Smet was to traverse lands largely unknown to white men as he journeyed to the valley of the Bitterroot. In the course of this journey the two finally reached the ragged ridge line of the Rockies. There atop the parapets of the wilderness De Smet celebrated by writing verse. In this scene of solemn loneliness he praised his God and then saluted the immutable "Stonies." In the light of days yet to come and travelers yet unborn he wrote:

> "All hail majestic Rock--the home
> Where many a wanderer yet shall come;

1840, Rev. P[eter] de Smet joined the Flatheads[9] who were then in the midst of their buffalo hunt.[10]

Where God himself from his own heart
Shall health and peace and joy impart."

Thomas A. Hughes, "The Journal of a Western Missionary," The Woodstock Letters, XXI (July, 1892), 155.

[9] Brouillet, a Canadian trader in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, agreed to join the Indians at the Green River rendezvous in order to assure them that the visitor was indeed a Black Gown. When he saw De Smet's crucifix, he did so. Joset, "Chronology of the Rocky Mountain Missions," p. 1.

Major Peter Ronan describes the reception of this news: "Upon this announcement the chief ordered ten of his warriors to proceed ahead without delay and conduct the missionary to the Flathead camp, the chief following with the whole tribe." Historical Sketch of Flathead Nation, p. 27.

De Smet was escorted to the spot where "sixteen hundred Indians were camped on the line separating Idaho and Wyoming." After receiving the traditional Flathead greeting, "gest Sgalgat," Chief Big Face offered De Smet his official headdress as a mark of deep friendship. "Chief's Authority Over Indians Declined by Father P. S. De Smet," The Sunday Missoulian (Missoula, Montana), August 24, 1841, p. 1.

The Jesuit was then conducted to the Chief's tent where he was officially welcomed with a speech translated by Gabriel Prudhomme. "How the Old Mission of St. Mary's Was Founded," The Anaconda (Montana) Standard, December 17, 1899, p. 40.

The chief's recitation was in part thanks, and in part a plea: "Kualik (Black Robe), speak! We are all your children. Show us the path where abides the Great Spirit. We will follow the words of your mouth." Sister Mary Francesca, "Semi-Centennial of Father De Smet," The Indian Sentinel, III (Spring, 1923), 53.

[10] Father De Smet arrived with a staff for a permanent mission on August 15, 1841. Shea, Church in the United States, III, 313. A site for the mission was selected near the middle of the Bitterroot Valley. There on the feast of Our Lady of Mercy, September 24, the Brothers felled some trees and constructed a large cross, while the others in the party chanted the "Vexilla Regis." Stout, History of

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Montana, II, 149.
This first white settlement in Montana, named St. Mary by De Smet, had both house and chapel by St. Martin's Day. On the first Sunday of October the mission was formally dedicated. During that same month representatives from twenty-four neighboring Indian nations came to visit the Black Robes. In November, after their return from the hunt, one-third of the Flatheads were already baptized. "Stevensville, St. Mary Mission to be a Shrine," *The Daily Missoulian* (Missoula, Montana), June 21, 1953.

CHAPTER VII

THE LANDS OF THE FLATHEADS

Perhaps it would be appropriate here to summarize the views of the fathers, derived from their letters written up to and including the year 1847, respecting their comments on the life of the savages living at St. Mary's.[1]

The village of the Flatheads and the residence of the missionaries are located on a large plain shaped like an oval, a basin about fifty miles in length, at some points six miles wide and at others eight or ten.[2] Two

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[1] Preface, note 2, ante. Additional letters are located in GASJ and on microfilm in the Jesuit Archives, Gonzaga University.

[2] The homeland of the Flathead tribe proper, at least in historic time, was just west of the Continental Divide in the Bitterroot Valley. Teit, "Salishan Tribes," p. 310; Turney-High, Flathead Indians, p. 12.

Meriwether Lewis added: "The country in the valley of this river [the Clark] is generally prairie and from five to six miles wide." DeVoto, Journals of Lewis and Clark, p. 235.

De Smet added to the verbal picture by noting that "the valley is two hundred miles long, and has but one fine defile, the Hell Gate, offering issue and entrance to the valley." Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 344.

The Flatheads had pride in their country, and a love for it that perhaps even exceeded in some degree the similar sentiments ordinarily entertained by Indian groups for their long established regional homes. Theirs was more than an extensive valley easily defended, which was a fact of unusual consequence to a people continually harassed by the more powerful and numerous Blackfoot and great chains of mountains which are almost always snow covered border the plain from north to south. Their height above sea level is such that they could be described as forming the backbone of the earth's crust in this region.[3] The origins of the river flowing by the village, which is

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Crows who lived east of the Rockies. From the east, where lay the greatest danger, the valley was accessible only through the narrow Hell Gate defile where from times immemorial, the Flatheads had met their enemies in many desperate frays. West of Hell Gate gorge the Missoula Valley extended to the confluence of the Missoula and Bitterroot rivers, and in that neighborhood was an established assembly ground where many tribes and the whites met one another, for affairs of peace such as the signing of the peace treaty with Governor Isaac Stevens. There also the white traders came to exchange their goods. Still farther westward, beyond the junction of the two rivers, the Missoula Valley led through difficult passes to the homes of the Pend d'Oreilles and Coeur d'Alenes. To the westward of the Bitterroot Valley, and extending for its entire length, stood the formidable barrier of the Bitter Root Mountains, nearly two hundred miles long from north to south and having a width of from fifty to seventy-five miles.

This tremendous tumult of peaks constitutes what is perhaps the most difficult area of equal size within the continental limits of the United States, and it is still, in parts, virtually unknown and unpenetrated. The only practicable pass through these mountains is the Lolo, which debouches from the valley about ten miles from its lower or northern end. Some fifty miles south of the Lolo Trail the lofty Nez Perce Pass, previously mentioned, also leads to the westward, but no war party could successfully attack the Flatheads by that route. Further southward, where the Bitter Root Mountains merge with the mainstream of the Rockies, are several other minor passes but they are nearly impassable. Owen, Journals and Letters, I, 4.

[3] To the west Mengarini refers to the Bitter Root Range; east he refers to the Lewis Range of the Big Belt Mountains. Goode, World Atlas, p. 73.

a branch of the Columbia River, are lost about forty miles to the southeast of Saint Mary's where they join the headwaters of the Missouri.[4] The first is twelve hundred miles from its mouth on the Pacific Ocean. Interrupted by numerous rapids and falls it is not possible to travel upon it from Saint Mary's to Vancouver. The other is four thousand miles distant from the Gulf of Mexico.[5]

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[4] The Bitterroot River, or as De Smet called it, the St. Mary's River, rises in two forks in the main chain of the Rockies, on the northern slope of the divide between Montana and Idaho, and flows almost directly north through a beautiful, fertile valley, until at Fort Missoula it unites with the Hell Gate to form Missoula River. Its headwaters to the southwest are the Clark. Near Helena, Montana, nearly 100 miles from the Bitterroot Valley, it joins the headwaters of the Missouri. Ibid.

In his later narrative, "Mengarini describes his initial discovery of the source of the Missouri":

> "Some days before this we had discovered one of the sources of the Missouri. It was on the top of a high hill. The soil was very moist and a large stream of water was insuing from the ground. On the other side of the hill, but a few rods away, so near in fact that with a ploughshare I could unite the two."

Partoll, "Mengarini's Narrative," p. 259.

David Thompson did not realize that the northward-flowing river he came upon June 30, 1807, was the source of the Columbia. Instead he named it the Kootenae in honor of the inhabitants of the surrounding prairie. David Thompson, "Discovery of the Source of the Columbia River," Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXVI (March, 1925), 23-49.

From encampments south up the Bitterroot Valley the Flatheads often crossed the Saphire Mountains via Skalkaho Pass to the headwaters of Rock Creek, then followed down that stream to its junction with the Clark Fork. A similar trail ran from the head of Rock Creek over the John Long Mountains to the Flint Creek Valley and down it to the Hell Gate. A circuitous third route looped from the upper Flint Creek drainage through the Anaconda and Deer Lodge valleys to the eastern entrance to the canyon. Additional roads linked the Deer Lodge Trail with the Silver Bow Valley to the east and with Missouri, Yellowstone and Snake River trails through the Big Hole Basin to the south. Malouf, Economy and Land Use by the Indians of Montana, pp. 42-43.

Its great elevation above sea level is probably the reason for the infrequent rainfall in this village, as well as the reason for the frosts which continue not only into spring and autumn, but into summer which itself is limited to the months of June and July. There is little doubt, furthermore, that the great elevation accounts in part for the truly terrible storms which at times continue for entire weeks without cessation.[6] These three things, the lack of rain, the cold, and the storms, make the village most unpromising for farming.[7]

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[5] In reality the aerial distance between St. Mary's and the Mississippi delta, the logical point of definition along the Gulf, is 1700 miles. Although such measurement does not allow for the meandering course of the river, it indicates that the distance would still be somewhat less than 4,000 miles. C[harles] S. Hammond, Hammond's Globemaster World Atlas (New York, 1948), p. 38.

[6] Influence of elevation cannot be disputed. In a geographic range where winter temperatures in January average 10° to 30° above zero, the lands of the Cordillerian Plateau are much lower. Goode, World Atlas, p. 8.

A few decades later in 1879 the same complaint was repeated by another missionary from Rome.

> "Thank God that our small wooden house is provided with good camini and iron stoves, with good skins and blankets; but with all this the cold finds a way of putting in its nose, and that one nose is far more powerful than all the good fire in our bedrooms. In the morning we find the water frozen in the well, the ink frozen in the calamaio, and the lovely fire having the features of a painting. In church it is even worse: we have a fine stove, we even put the fire on the altar, you won't believe it, but with all this, the chalice freezes during Mass, sometimes even twice during the same Mass."

Rappagliosi, Memorie, p. 110.

The soil, which is naturally dry and filled with large rocks, becomes even less fertile because of the draught, and we cannot find arable spots except along the creeks which are often located great distances from each other. We can have some idea of the difficulty this presents when we consider that to cultivate one hundred acres of land the Flatheads are forced to make five different camps within a sixteen mile area. In addition to this, the large rocks hidden beneathe the surface of the ground frequently break the plows, rendering them useless. The cultivation of the land is further curtailed by the frost which continues throughout the year. With the exception of wheat, barley, oats, and a few potatoes, we have been unable to harvest much.[8] We have succeeded in growing no legumes except for peas. Unfortunately, these and the wheat, which could yield much nourishment, are completely destroyed in the bloom of their growth by storms, causing those who come to this country to apply to themselves the biblical condemnation: In sudore vultus tui vesceris pane.[9]

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[7] In addition to these very real hardships, agricultural advances were forestalled by the fact that the soil is made up of highly infertile padzolized soil with Lithosis. Goode, World Atlas, p. 191.

Nevertheless, many who had preceded the Jesuits had argued in favor of agriculture. Kit Carson had advanced the proposition, adding that the government troops should be placed over the tribes as they tilled the earth. Even Alexander Ross had expressed a good deal of concern for the Indian throughout his career, advocating agriculture as a means of civilizing the Indians in his earlier writings. In his last three books, however, he intimated that such a plan sprang from the idle dreams. On the basis of experiences at Red River, he conceded that it was a terribly difficult task, "almost a hopeless one, to accustom the children of the wilderness to the use of the hoe, the spade or the plough . . ." Ross, The Red River Settlement, quoted in Saum, The Fur Trader and the Indian, p. 235.

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[8] In another account Mengarini reflected upon the farming venture, adding: "Our hopes, however, were not realized. Chickens, hogs and cows were also brought [in addition to seeds] but only the last proved to be a profitable investment." Partoll, "Mengarini's Narrative," p. 201.

De Smet offers a conflicting observation in a letter written September 6, 1846. Discussing the agricultural progress at St. Mary's, he observed: "The soil yields abundant crops of wheat, oats, and potatoes--the rich prairie here is capable of supporting thousands of cattle." Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XXIX, 322.

Like De Smet, Father Adrian Hoecken was optimistic, writing:

> "Our Indians do very well, we have about a 100 bushels of wheat, barley, peas, corn, potatoes, in the ground. St. Mary's mission, according to Indian relations, has produced more than will be consumed--the saw and grin[d] mill are in operation."

Adrian Hoecken to Father Superior Joseph Joset, St. Ignatius, May 10, 1845, MS, GASJ.

Another contradictory observation is offered in 1868 by Special Indian Agent William J. Cutler. In attempting to explain the resistance by the Flatheads to removal to the Jocko Indian Reservation, he wrote to Nathaniel G. Taylor, Commissioner of Indian Affairs:

> "The removal of these Indians from the Bitter Root Valley, where they have heretofore lived, to their reservation in the Jocko, is a question of deep interest to the Indians as well as to the white settlers of the Valley, and is one by no means easy of solution. The Bitter Root Valley is about 100 miles long by from 7 to 10 miles wide. It has a very fertile soil, a mild and genial climate, is well watered and timbered, and is one of the best, if not the very best, agricultural districts in Montana. In this inviting region have settled a large number of whites, many of whom have opened and cultivated large farms, and made valuable improvements thereon."

William J. Cullen to Nathaniel G. Taylor, October 9, 1868, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, No. 50 (Washington, D.C., 1868), pp. 219-20.

All the Flathead lands abound in a wide variety of herbs, principally artemisa or Ormoise estragon.[10] We also find angelica which is used as a headache remedy by the savages who grind the roots and then inhale the powder through the nose;[11] and gentian lutea purpurea and chirayta, the leaves of which are potent poison, especially for horses who die a few hours after eating it.[12] Consequently, the savages, though having great knowledge of these roots, fear them. Other herbs are: agrimonia officinale, of which the natives use the roots, not the leaves, as antidotes for diarrhoea and sore throat;[13]

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[9] The passage is more familiar in translation: "In the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread . . . ." Genesis 3:19.

[10] De Smet soon observed that the herb absinthe (artemisia; sage-brush) is indigenous to this country; it grows to a height of eight or ten feet and is in great abundance. Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 213.

Ormoise estragen may have been Mengarini's French appellation for artemisia dracunculus, known in English as tarragon. The herb found in central and southern Europe, Russia and Siberia has the following applications: Appetizing, stomachic, diuretic, aromatic, cooling, carminative, antiscorbutic, emmenagogue, vermifuge, used for culinary purposes. Edward F. Steinmetz, Codex Vegetabilis (Amsterdam, 1957), No. 138.

The Indian turned confidently to the white man's medicine but his own pharmacopeia was equally varied and effective. For a tonic and for venereal medicine the aborigines used a concoction of the Oregon grape; for an emetic, the extract of the camas root, or of the cucumber vine, the latter being employed also as a cathartic; for gonorrhea, a tea steeped from a species of fern and the smoke of certain plants and woods; for abortion and a stimulant in childbirth, a powder made from the tail of a rattlesnake; for a poultice, the inside bark of the skunk weed; for the fomentation for bruises and sprains, the juice of a colt's foot; for broken limbs, splints of wood and bandages. . . . Swellings the Indians often scarified, and bad sores they frequently cauterized. Gibbs, Report of Explorations, I, 207.

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[11] The abbreviated reference does not indicate clearly whether the herb in question was angelica silvestris, which is indigenous to temperate areas and more bitter in flavor than angelica archangelica or archangelica officinalis. Since both can serve as nerve tonics and antispasmodics, the Flatheads could have used both for a headache remedy. The fact, however, that the latter grows as far north as Lapland and Iceland suggests that it may have been the angelica of Montana. Steinmetz, Codex Vegetabilis, No. 157.

[12] Because of the profuse growth of gentian lutea or bitter root in their valley, the Flatheads thus named the valley and the surrounding mountains. Gentian has been known from the days of antiquity, and is said to have derived its name from Gentius, king of Illyria. Many of the complex remedies handed down by the Greeks and the Arabs included it as an ingredient. The curative quality of the bitter gentian is limited to a local effect upon the mucous membrane of the alimentary tract.

The only justification for Mengarini's assertion as to the poisonous qualities of yellow or purple (Indian) gentian would be that an overdose would act as a local irritant causing nausea. Arthur Osol, Robertson Pratt, and Mark D. Altschule, The United States Dispensatory and Physicians' Pharmocology (26th ed.; Philacelphia, 1967), p. 538.

[13] Agrimonia officinale may refer to the liverwort plant, officially known as agrimonia eupatria. The herb, found in Europe, northern Asia and North America, is useful as a diuretic, astringent and in treating enurisis nocturna. Steinmetz, Codex Vegetabilis, No. 41.

In writing of Indian maladies, Gibbs observed that diarrhoea is a common and often fatal disorder, particularly among children. Report of Explorations, p. 209.

apium graveolensor or wild celery which the Flatheads and other savages in this part of North America smoked before learning of tobacco;[14] *cicuta maculata*,[15] *cicutaria quatica* or *cicuta virosa*[16] which taken in an extraordinary quantity causes death not only among animals, but also among the native themselves, especially the children, if they are not forced to swallow great quantities of liquified fat. Finally, there are cochlea via armoracea, la digitale pupurea and camomila,[17] as well as a great number of other herbs and roots which the savages often use, but which we are unable to name, for the savages gather them far from Saint Mary's. I have also noticed a kind of white carrot which presumably is similar to the white carrot of Silesia.[18] The savages make little use of it, however, because its sweet flavor disgusts them.

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[14] *Opium graveolensor dulce* is found almost throughout the world and is described as an aromatic seed used as a diuretic, carminative, and emenagogue. Steinmetz, *Codex Vegetabilis*, No. 111. Its value as an alternative to tobacco is unique to the North American Indians. Of this later predilection for tobacco, Ross Cox wrote: "They [the Flatheads] were passionately fond of tobacco, and while they remained with us never ceased smoking." *Adventures*, p. 102.

Father Point added a few details about the use of tobacco among these Indians. He observed "that usage requires that the youngest prepare the tobacco. He always mixes it with a kind of small leaf, called by the Indians *Kinnikinnik*, which enters into the composition of the calumet's contents only for the purpose of tempering its force or, even more important, of making the principal component stretch farther." Probably because of this custom the word *Kinnikinnik* was commonly used by the Indians to denote tobacco. *Wilderness Kingdom*, p. 147.

[15] *Cicuta maculata* or poison hemlock and *cicutaria quatica* (*cicuta aquatica*), also known as cowbane or water hemlock, are entirely poisonous, especially the hollow roots which are often mistaken for parsnips. A single mouthful can kill a man within fifteen minutes. Wyeth Laboratories, *Sinister Garden* (New York, 1966), p. 36.

[16] *Cicuta virosa*, less common than the water hemlock, appears similar to the untrained eye. The poisonous properties are the same. The brown, resin-like substance, cicutoxin, is the most violent poisonous species in the United States. Children and adults have found the root fatal, though greatest mortality has been among cattle. But during the spring, when it is believed the plant is most poisonous, even horses, sheep, and swine have died. Walter Muenscher, *Poisonous Plants of the United States* (rev. ed.; New York, 1951), p. 175.

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[17] Cochlearia armoracia or horseradish is used as both a stimulant and as an appetizing aid to the digestive process. Steinmetz, Codex Vegetabilis, No. 325.

Digitalis purpurea or purple fox glove was named after its finger-shaped corolla by Tragus in 1539. The plant is a biennial herb, probably indigenous to central and southern Europe and naturalized in various parts of Canada, Europe and the United States. It has been official in most pharmocopeias since the eighteenth century. Edward P. Claus and Varro E. Tyler, Pharmocognosy (5th ed.; Philadelphia, 1965), p. 96.

Camomila, common camomile or matricaria chamomilla, is a widely available flowered herb used as a sedative, antiseptic, digestive tonic and soporific. Steinmetz, Codex Vegetabilis, No. 698.

[18] This may be similar to the "small white root of rather insipid taste," referred to by Gibbs, Report of Explorations, p. 193.

A similar reference is made by Father Point, who wrote:

> "There was in the area in which we found ourselves a variety of edible roots. There was a small white carrot of excellent flavor and a potato which would, perhaps, differ little from ours if it were cultivated. But since it never reaches a size exceeding two or three centimeters in diameter and is fairly scarce, it is for the Indian a treasure that remains buried. The other species, introduced by our brothers, replaces it abundantly."

Wilderness Kingdom, p. 166.

The mountains are composed of aggregate granite which is particularly well-adapted for millstones. Within one hundred and fifty miles of Saint Mary's I detected not one indication of limestone, or chalk, or coal, not to mention a variety of minerals.[19]

Without a sextant it is impossible to determine with any great degree of exactitude, the geographical location of our residence. According to many maps, however, we can calculate the location as being approximately between 117° and 120° longitude and between 46° and 47° latitude.[20] Nevertheless, the cold is excessive. From November 15, 1842, until February 20, of the following year, the temperature was almost constantly 24° below zero on Ramur's[21] [sic] thermometer, and at various times through March during the winter of 1846 it was 27° below zero.[22]

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[19] Mengarini did not suspect the area possessed great mineral wealth. Copper, lead and silver were later found in extensive deposits. Today coal, gems and placer diggings have each contributed to Montana's wealth. Stout, History of Montana, I, 101-02.

Nor did Mengarini mention the widespread deposits of pipe clay which the Flatheads used regularly to clean their leather shirts and robes. Other nineteenth century observers also noted that the Flatheads conducted a brisk trade in objects made from the flint and pipestone secured in quarries on the upper limits of Flint Creek flowing through Hell Gate Canyon. Ronan, History of the Flatheads, p. 9.

Furthermore, the Flatheads were famous for their fine pipes of black stone inlaid with Catlinite and other materials found in the Flathead country. Wissler, "Material Culture of the Blackfoot," p. 83.

[20] Mengarini's computations are accurate in view of his limited resources for gathering such data. The present-day town of Ronan, Montana, located near the original St. Mary's mission, lies at 47° 30' N., 114° 6' W. Goode, World Atlas, p. 243.

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[21] On the Reaumur scale the melting point of ice is measured as 0°R and the boiling point of water is 80°R. Rene Raeumur's thermometric scale (1730) was constructed on the principle of taking the freezing point of water as 0° and graduating the tube of the thermometer into degrees each of which was one-thousandth of the volume contained in the bulb and tube up to the zero mark. Some contend that it was an accident dependent upon the coefficient of expansion of a particular quality of alcohol employed which made the boiling point of water 80°R. *Encyclopedia Britannica* (24 vols.; Chicago, 1966), XIX, 18; Adelle Huechtlinger, comp., *Modern Science Dictionary of Anatomy, Geology, Astronomy, Botany, Chemistry, Meteorology and Physics*, revised by William Abbott (London, 1961), p. 416.

[22] A clerk employed by the Hudson's Bay Company, Neil McLean McArthur, offered further testimony regarding the cold. From March, 1846 until 1847 while he resided at the Flathead post of Fort Connah, he was forced to ask Mengarini for additional blankets despite the fact that the Jesuits had already given him several. He based his request on the fact that it was colder indoors than outside. "For," said he, "outside a dew falls at night, and when the dew freezes it forms a coat impervious to cold, but nothing of the kind happens inside."

In addition to the anecdote, Mengarini recalled that during the severe winter, water placed in a pan had frozen into a solid cake which, rising into a kind of hemisphere, splintered into four parts. The same befell the sleeping men who awakened to find that a frozen shell formed around their blankets and buffalo robes during the night. Partoll, "Mengarini's Narrative," p. 307.

Father Joset corroborated the intensity of the cold. "The winter of 46-47 was the severest I ever witnessed with the one exception of the one in 48-49. The cold was so intense that only the stoutest man had courage enough to go for fuel." In the "Chronology" he added: "The winter was very severe; the cold intense. At the Flatheads the thermometer (Reaumur) was in the house -14° and outside -31°." Joset Papers, XIX, p. 8, Jesuit Archives, Gonzaga University.

There is evidence the climatic conditions in the area have changed in the past half century or so. Pioneer inhabitants of the Hell Gate report that seventy years ago

The place we now call Saint Mary's was once called *Lkaetlemelsch* or *wooded place* by the Flatheads, while among the Canadians it was referred to as *racine amere*,[23] because of the great quantities of those bitter roots which form a large part of the diet of these savages.[24] (See letter to

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the winters were much more severe than today. Snow came to stay in September, with two and three-foot caps on the peaks. By October the Blackfoot-Clark Fork junction would have ice frozen over for the winter, and wagons could cross on the ice without danger. In 1885-1886 the snow is reported to have been four and five feet deep on the level. In 1907 it was eight feet deep in the canyon and thirty feet in the hills, precipitating a disastrous flood the following year. Griswold and Larom, *The Hell Gate Survey*, p. 8.

[23] Racine Amere is the French name for the plant, *lewisia rediviva*, commonly referred to as the bitterroot plant.

To Father De Smet, La Racine Amere of the Canadian trappers became Saint Mary's. Upon discovering it on his overland journey in 1804-1806, Meriwether Lewis called it the Clark. Today the river is called the Bitterroot. Garraghn, *Jesuits of the Middle United States*, II, 348.

[24] The Flathead could depend upon a variety of wildlife to supplement the buffalo diet. Flathead Lake and the environs support a large population of fish, including several native types, and is consequently the habitat for such fish-eating birds as ospreys, loons and gulls. Native game birds in the area include grouse, ducks and geese. In addition to the usual small game animals, numerous white-tail deer frequent the lake, and in the mountains beyond are elk, moose, Rocky Mountain goats, bighorn sheep and both black and grizzly bears. At some time past buffalo were to be found in the region. Predators include coyotes, weasels, martens, foxes, wildcats, mountain lions, and an occasional lynx and timber wolf. Malouf, *Land Use*, pp. 24-25.

In the early 1800s Lewis and Clark described the hills as covered with Ponderosa Pine and the bottom lands filled with bunch grass. The rivers were bordered by aspen, cottonwoods, alders and willows, as well as a variety of wild berries. But in times of famine the Flatheads were not above eating the pellicle found between the

N.P.G. September 1847.)[25]

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bark and the wood of certain trees.

Of substantial economic importance to the Flathead were the camas and bitter root plants. The onion-shaped roots, which tasted somewhat like a prune or a chestnut, were clawed from the soft spring earth with a stick by women who would begin their labors before sunrise, digging, cooking and often drying for future use and even trade.

The "First Fruits Ceremony" always preceded the harvest. When all the participants had made camp near the meadows bright with the lovely blue of the camas flower, the high chief appointed two mature women to act as principals and told off a specific number of other women to act as assistants. The group then set forth to a well-known fruitful field. Upon arrival the senior old woman raised her arm to the sun and prayed for success, security and good health and fortune for all. This done, the same prayer was made to the earth. Then they began digging. When a sufficiency had been dug, the supply was taken to the village and deposited in front of the high chief's lodge where it was cooked in a pit by his women.

When the meal was ready the chief rose before the people, and extending his arm, prayed to the sun. Having finished, he pointed to the earth and repeated his prayer. The food was then distributed to the people. Turney-High, Flathead Indians of Montana, pp. 34-35.

The ecology of food plants and animals had a profound effect on Flathead military relations. The camas (quamasta quamash), and bitter root (lewisia rediviva), are not found on the semi-arid plains, and the Plains type Indians, lacking adequate vegetable food, sought treaties with the Salish monopolists, enabling them to enter the valleys and gather the plants. In exchange for this privilege, the Plains people were to permit the Salish to enter the eastern grasslands in search of bison. Harry Turney-High, "Cooking Camas and Bitter Root," Scientific Monthly, XXXVI (March, 1933), 265.

[25] This was a reference to Mengarini's annual report to Father John Roothaan, the Very Reverend General of the Society of Jesus in Rome. David, History of St. Ignatius, p. 2.

CHAPTER VIII

A DISAPPEARING TRIBE

The population of the Flatheads numbers little more than five hundred souls particularly after the losses of this past year 1847, in which eighty-six persons died--the largest number from an epidemic of smallpox.[1] But it was not always so.

About seventy years ago, according to the calculations of the elders, the Flatheads included at least eight hundred families or about four thousand people.[2] Now it occurred that while a small number had left for a buffalo hunt, all those remaining in camp were attacked by a devastating plague which in a very few days killed everyone with the exception of fifteen children who were not infected by the disease. Among this number were Peter the great leader, and old Simon who died shortly after the arrival of the missionaries and of whom we have spoken in preceding pages, as well as others who still live. The disease caused the growth of large red and black pustules over the entire body, particularly on the chest. Those developing red pustules died within a few days, but those who were plagued by the black pustules died almost instant-

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[1] Chittenden likens Indian losses in combat to a bagatelle, when measured against death from pandemic disease introduced by the whites. He points especially to the smallpox scourge of 1837 (it had first appeared in 1800). It was introduced by the steamboat St. Peter, arriving at Fort Union on June 24, 1837. By the end of the year all the tribes of the Missouri Valley above the Sioux had been stricken. The total mortality among the Blackfoot, Crows, Mandans, Minnetaries and Aricaras was near to 15,000. Chittenden, The American Fur Trade of the Far West, II, 612-19.

Other authorities agree, noting that before the smallpox epidemic of 1781-1782, the number of Indians in the Northwest was between 75,000 and 100,000. After the fever and ague of 1830-1831 only fiften or twenty thousand remained.

[2] Probably eight per cent of native peoples of the Pacific Northwest were swept away by white man's diseases during the half century that preceded Oregon Trail migration. The first of these white man's plagues probably was smallpox, which in 1781-1782 swept from the Upper Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean. The second great scourge was

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"fever and ague," which ravaged the Indian races in 1830-1831. These epidemics spent their fury in short periods of time, but their end did not palliate the later mortality resulting from tuberculosis, measles, sex diseases and liquor.

But in the face of such pandemic destruction, researcher Leslie M. Scott self-righteously contends that the decline of native population made the Northwest safe for white settlement, and consequently susceptible to United States acquisition. "Indian Diseases as Aids to Pacific Northwest Settlement," Oregon Historical Review, XXIX (March, 1928), 144-61.

In response to this destructive onslaught, Father Anthony Ravalli brought a vaccine for smallpox from Italy in 1845. When his supply of drugs was exhausted, he attempted to standardize the herbs which the Indians used. But he could not convince himself that many of them were of value. He made alcohol from camas root for use in his drug room. "Only Two of the Original Buildings Still Standing," The Montana Standard (Helena, Montana), June 21, 1841, Section 2, p. 1.

ly.[3] During this same period the epidemic destroyed another entire nation of savages who spoke a different tongue and dwelt about five days' journey from the Flatheads.[4] Of them there remained not even the name.

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[3] According to Dr. Michael Kogen, Director of Epidemic Disease Study at USC-County Medical Center, Mengarini's description suggests either regular or hemoragic smallpox, the latter causing black rather than red lesions. Yet he questioned the rate of infection and attack, since no epidemic disease has a nearly total attack rate, for in some instances it infects at merely the immunizing level. It is also difficult to understand that the fifteen to survive would be children, normally the most vulnerable. Michael Kogen, M.D., to Gloria Lothrop, Los Angeles, June 6, 1968, Personal Correspondence.

In response, one can only cite historic fact. For example, the epidemic begun with the docking of the steamboat St. Peter's in 1837 resulted in the death of nearly thirty thousand. According to De Smet, of 1,200 Mandan tribesmen, only seven families survived! Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, I, 189.

[4] It is difficult to identify this particular tribe since the fever which attacked in the 1830s destroyed many entire tribes. As Hall Jackson Kelley wrote in his "Memoir," by 1834 the Indian population along the Columbia River, which Lewis and Clark had estimated as being about eight thousand, twenty-eight years before, numbered only four hundred.

"Places were pointed out to me," says Wilkes, "where dwelt whole tribes, that have been entirely swept off, and during the time of the greatest mortality the shores of the river were strewn with the dead and dying." Cited in Scott, "Indian Diseases," p. 47.

In 1832 Nathaniel Wyeth was to record that the Indians of the Cascades were all dead. "Only two women left, a sad remnant of a large number." Ibid., p. 49.

Perhaps the tribe referred to had been annihilated at an earlier date. Teit writes that almost the entire Salish-Tuna'xe and the greater part of the Se mte'use are said to have been killed off in wars. The survivors were nearly all wiped out by smallpox about 1800. "Salishan Tribes," pp. 314-16.

Ten years before this catastrophe visited them it was presaged by another calamity. The Flatheads were busily collecting roots when they were surprised by a very thick fog which developed into the finest rain of white droplets as dry and bitter as nitrate salts. This was followed by an earthquake similar to the eruption of a volcano.[5] All ceased as a large number of Flatheads who had

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[5] A possible explanation for the unusual events could have been an intense concentration of sulphur dioxide or sulphur fumes. Such could have produced results somewhat along these lines, although instantaneous death would not have occurred. Robert A. Dightman to Gloria R. Lothrop, Helena, Montana, June 6, 1968, Personal Correspondence.

Professor Richard D. Dougherty of Washington State University, who currently is conducting anthropological research in the area, has observed that Mt. St. Helens' is reported to have been active in the early 1800's and probably Mt. Rainier as well. Richard Dougherty to Gloria R. Lothrop, Pullman, Washington, November 29, 1968. Ibid.

Two other accounts of the catastrophe add to its credibility. Elkanah Walker wrote:

> "They say some forty or fifty years ago there was a great fall of ashes, the truth of which is very plain now to be seen in turning up the ground. They say that it was a very long night with heavy thunder. They feared the world would fall to pieces and their hearts were very small. The quantity which fell was about six inches.
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> "I asked them which way the wind was, hoping by that to find out in what direction they came from, supposing that it was from a volcano. But they said there was no wind. At the time of the fall of ashes there was about six inches of snow on the ground. It did not extend as far south as the Nez Perce Country."

Clifford C. Drury, Elkanah and Mary Walker (Caldwell, Idaho, 1940), p. 130.

Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, who headed the official United States exploring expedition through the Oregon Country in 1838, offered a similar account told to him by Chief Big Head (renamed Cornelius), who claimed he was awakened by a great thundering noise, to find that some-been instantly killed began to fall here and there. We have never been able to understand from whence this emanated, especially since there is not a vestige of a volcano in all these lands with exception of a place the Canadians call la loge aux chevreux, which is a small mountain no more than thirty feet high isolated in the middle of a great plain. At its summit there are eight small pools of spring water, some of which are very cold, others are lukewarm, and others half boiling, and all the terrain nearby is covered with soda.[6] But aside from the fact that this place is at least one hundred miles from the spot where the Flatheads were then located, the most elderly are sure they have always seen this small, possibly

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thing was falling which at first appeared to be snow, but proved to be ashes which fell to six inches in depth. Wilkes added that within the year of his expedition the craters on the top of Mt. Rainier and Mt. St. Helens' had been active. Ibid., pp. 130-31.

An extensive review of reports and tales regarding Mt. St. Helens' eruptions is found in Kenneth L. Holmes' "Mount St. Helens' Recent Eruptions," Oregon Historical Quarterly, LVI (September, 1955), 197-210.

[6] It is possible that the reference is to one of the highest peaks in the western range of the Bearpaw Mountains. It is an extinct crater, dating from the post-tertiary period. Lava, tufa, and volcanic soil are plentiful in the area. Stout, History of Montana, I, 94.

The reference may also be to a fur rendezvous area known as Prairie de Chevaux. An entry in the journal of Alexander Ross on November 29, 1824, notes: "Kootenais joined Flatheads at Prairie de Chevaux." Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, I, 217.

volcanic mountain in the same state in which it is presently found.

Moreover, we are convinced that the savages in this region will continue to decrease ever more if it holds true that where whites have penetrated and multiply, the savages diminish and disappear. Undoubtedly, of the many tribes which formerly occupied the entire territory of the United States, now only the name remains (with the exception of a few Sciavanon and Delawares).[7] The town of Wilamette, in fact all of Oregon, offers a forceful example. It is but a few years since the Americans entered the Wilammette valley. But from their initial entry to the present, the savages have contracted epidemic diseases each year, and since each epidemic, however slight, is mortal to them, they die by the hundreds each year.

Last year's wagon train was infected with small pox. Upon arrival at Fort Hall all those who were there were affected and as a result, those who came to Saint

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[7] Evidence of this westward shift is still evident in the twentieth century, although the number of Delawares is vastly diminished. The press of white settlement had displaced them from their original location bordered by the Potomac and Hudson rivers. From there they moved to the Ohio Valley and later to land southwest of Fort Leavenworth on the Missouri. In 1950 half of the surviving two thousand Delaware Indians lived in Oklahoma, and the rest in Wisconsin and Ontario, Canada. Encyclopedia Britannica, VII, 194-95.

Mary's communicated it to all the Flatheads.[8] Those continuing on their journey, infected all the savages they met. As a result the Pend d'Oreilles, the Nez Perce, the Caldaj, the Walla Walla, the Kaius, the Saluspen, and the Chinook were each attacked by smallpox and a great number died; and at almost the same time and for the same reason the Blackfeet, the Mandans, the Crows, and the Crees on the other side of the mountain died in great numbers.[9]

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[8] Statistics give added credence to this report. Observations by Samuel Parker from 1835 to 1837 place the Flathead population at 800. Parker, Journal, p. 311. Three years later De Smet rendered a similar opinion as to the number. De Smet, Voyages aux Montagnes Rocheuses, p. 331. One might conclude that population factors were fairly constant. But between 1853-1855, Mullan placed the Flathead population at 400. It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that disease of epidemic proportions could have reduced the population by one-half. Merriam provides additional demographic information to support this position. Merriam, Ethnomusicology of the Flathead Indians, p. 347.

The decline is made more dramatic by Teit's assertion that the total population of the Flathead tribes sometime after the introduction of the horse around 1725, or at least before the beginning of armed conflict with the Blackfeet, may have been in the neighborhood of 15,000. "Salishan Tribes," p. 314.

[9] Mengarini is not alone in accusing the white man of being the cause of these mass epidemics. Gibbs concurs that of the diseases to which the Indians are most subject, venereal in its different forms and smallpox, are assumed to have been introduced by whites. George Gibbs, "Tribes of Western Washington and Northwestern Oregon," Contributions to North American Ethnology, ed. by John Wesley Powell (Washington, 1877), pp. 227-368.

According to Hudson's Bay Company reports, the smallpox scourge began among tribes living between the sources of the Missouri and the Mississippi. It then spread northward to Athabasca and westward across the Rocky Mountains, and thence through the entire region of the

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Oregon Country.

From their observations Lewis and Clark concluded that smallpox had swept the Lower Columbia basin some thirty years before their arrival, or about the year 1780. The epidemics returned in 1837, 1846, and again in 1852-1853, when the coast tribes were particularly ravaged.

But to these diseases measles should be added for it was almost as fatal. John Minto, The Oregon Territory (London, 1844), p. 149.

CHAPTER IX

FLATHEAD LIFE

The Flatheads are of a very serious, penetrating and resolute character. They always speak slowly in a low voice. Never do we see one, regardless of how personally agitated or afflicted he may be, betray any external sign, for the Flathead considers anger and melancholy most ill-bred behavior.[1]

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[1] Some few traders saw in the Indian's reserve an indication of his self-interest. Edwin Denig, in spite of his mild admiration of the red men's stoicism, maintained that they rarely committed themselves verbally or emotionally because they were always suspicious of their fellows who might be taking advantage of them. Saum, The Fur Trader and the Indian, p. 190.

This widely manifested sobriety gave rise to the following injunction presented by Father Point.

> "Sometimes it is good to permit oneself a little pleasantry to erase the frown from the face of an Indian. One should do this rarely and the humorous remark should be an adroit one, otherwise the Indians who are like children, too readily lose respect [for the missionary]. Besides the Flathead who is naturally a shrewd observer, can jest with finesse. It is necessary to be clever at repartee if you do not wish to be bested."

Wilderness Kingdom, p. 150.

While it is widely believed that American Indians are taciturn, a contemporary scholar devoted to the study of the Flathead culture maintains that this generalization does not apply to the Flathead. Rather than being devoid of humor, jokes and joking, of often a practical variety, are commonplace, and most public sessions connected with music are notable for the light-hearted banter which surrounds them. Merriam, Ethnomusicology of the Flathead, p. 29.

When, however, they have decided upon a course of action, whether it be good or bad, it is most difficult to dissuade them unless it be a true friend, particularly a companion from adolescence. Such a Maecenas or patron has absolute power over the soul of a friend. He is refused nothing, and he is able to obtain that which neither the leaders nor the missionary would have been able to. By the same token, neither the missionaries nor the leaders can restrain from a misguided path one who is persuaded by an evil friend who does not wish it. Finally, the Flatheads place so great a store upon the friendship of another that in order to secure it they often give a comrade the shirts from their backs even without being asked.

Like any other tribe, the Flatheads have their tribal and martial music. By it they are recognized and distinguished from other tribes when all gather in reunion. It also inspires in them an incredible courage when battling their enemies. This music is without words. It expresses with simple vowels of i,a,e. Furthermore, it is without formal metric structure, being instead composed of a series of chromes.[2] Each note is given an equal emphasis,

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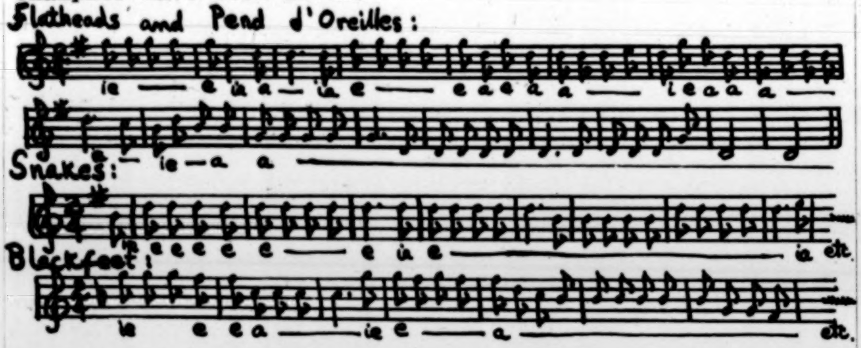
[2] While no musicological analysis has as yet been completed, some tentative conclusions may be advanced concerning the general character of Flathead music.

Musicologically, the group probably falls into the Plains area category as classified by Helen Roberts, Musical Areas in Aboriginal North America (New Haven, 1936), p. 39. The music of this area is characterized as all of this to the accompaniment of the drum.[3] Because it would be desirable to have some idea of the music, several examples have been added.


Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles:
ie — e ia a — ia e — e a e a a — ie a a a —
ie — a a
Snakes:
e e e e e — e ia e — ia etc.
Blackfoot:
ie e e a — ia e — a — etc.

"bold, open, with prominent dominants but more seconds and fourths, and fewer thirds; not acrobatic, but down-swooping, and containing a number of rather well marked variant types, each more typical of a given locality than the others."

This description seems to fit the music of the Flathead fairly well, with some exceptions of a technical nature. Flathead music is mainly vocal in character, the only purely instrumental music being represented by the end-blown flute. The melody line seems generally to be descending as in Plains music, and no harmony is to be found. Each musical category, and indeed, each song variation within each category, is an entity unto itself. Alan D. Merriam and Barbara W. Merriam, Flathead Indian Music (Missoula, 1950), p. 11.

Merriam suggests additional difficulties in discussing Flathead musical composition. "Just as they verbalize relatively little about the criteria for a good singer, and then on a nontechnical plane, neither do the Flathead conceptualize their music in such a way as to allow for technical discussion of formal structure." Merriam, Ethnomusicology of the Flathead Indians, p. 41.

[3] As Mengarini notes, the music is composed almost exclusively of even chromes, i.e., eighth notes. Although Mengarini explains that the music is written in a "parlando" style and without meter, he in fact notates these examples in double meter.

But the Flatheads much prefer the music of the whites, though they possess no talent for vocal music.[4]

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[4] The vocal quality employed by singers among the Flatheads is fairly typical of American Indian voice production generally. Using a tight, though open throat, but without employing the full resonance possibilities of the upper nasal cavities, a penetrating quality is produced in the style often labeled as the "clenched-teeth" or "ventriloquistic" style, although it is impossible to determine whether Flatheads used a more dynamic style of vocal production in previous times. Merriam, "Music of the Flathead Indians," p. 20.

Flathead singers sometimes perform alone, but prefer singing with a leader and chorus designated by common consent. The singing today is frequently accompanied by a flagelot, an end blown instrument made from hollowed elderberry wood. Ibid., p. 105.

Bishop James O'Connor's lament offers a graphic contemporary description of this particular shortcoming. He betrays his distress in the following passage:

> "I assisted at the High Mass. The singing by the choir, composed of the sisters and their pupils, was good, but truth compels me to say that the congregational singing, however edifying to those who participated in it, was to me simply shocking. It sounded as if at least a dozen harmonious wolves were scattered among the congregation and were doing their best to prove they had not been taught the gamut in vain."

"The Flathead Indians," p. 109.

It is interesting that in this discussion Mengarini fails to comment upon the musical talent expressed in the Blue Jay dance, described as the principal expression of joy and love of the Montana Salish. The dance consists of regular hops in the same rhythm as the music. Aside from rattles the music is entirely vocal. On the fourth and last night during which the same dance is performed before an evergreen tree, the tree is wrapped and hidden in the forest to be found by others. Wissler, Material Culture of the Blackfoot Indians, p. 89. Nor does Mengarini discuss the war dance songs like the Skull Dance which, no doubt, served as a funeral dirge before Christianization.

At the same time, the writings of Palladino indicate that Mengarini made use of many of these indigenous themes. He noted, in 1894:

> "One of the funeral dirges these Indians sing to this day whilst carrying their dead to rest, is an old war

Notwithstanding this, they become so enthusiastic after mastering some new little religious hymn that they repeatedly sing it, distorting it in such a manner that it is unrecognizable as they sing it at the top of their voices at least ten times a day.[5]

Both the young people and the small children have an admirable facility and quickness for learning whatever they are taught.[6] This forces one to conclude that if they did not have at least nine months vacation each year, they would be well trained in the arts.

Now let us briefly discuss Flathead government. We do not know exactly how to define it; it is a monarchy, it is anarchy; that is, call it what you want. It could be

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song of theirs, a stirring wail of lamentation they used to sing over their braves fallen in battle. It was set to music with Christian words by Father Mengarini, but unfortunately, the original setting, though the words are still the same, is no longer extant, and the present rendering of the song has lost much of what it used to be." Indian and White in Northwest, p. 76.

[5] A more indulgent explanation of this predilection to music and song is offered by a later Italian missionary to the Flatheads. Father Peter Prando wrote: "There is a vein of romance in the nature of these savages that accounts for their great love of song, and which greatly aids me in teaching them prayers and the truths of religion." "Letter from Father Prando," p. 326.

[6] Turney-High corroborates this ability to learn among Flathead youths, but attributes this to the parents' positive urging that they be helpful. As one informant explained: "We were proudest when we could surprise them with something extra we had done." Flathead Indians of Montana, p. 76.

defined as an anarchic monarchy.[7] Although the Flatheads have always recognized a great leader or king and several other second rank leaders, the only functions of the first consisted of marching at the head of the rest when hunting and of making some inspirational observations to the others each morning and evening.[8] The secondary leaders have no authority except in name, save for those who have been called heads because several families follow them.[9] As for the rest, there is no one law, no one ordinance, and consequently, no subordination among the citizens. In essence, no one punishment, instead each person absolute master over himself; to do whatever he wants, going wherever he pleases, and treating others according to the impulse of his passions without fearing revenge from those he has offended.[10]

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[7] George Gibbs also makes similar observations regarding the tribal policy of the Northwest Indians:

> "No division of tribes into clans is observable, nor any organization similar to the eastern tribes, neither have the Indians of this Territory emblematical distinctions resembling totem. . . . As regards the chiefdom, it is theoretically hereditary; but if on the death of the chief the eldest son is objectionable for stupidity or bad reputation, it is said that the tribe sometimes sets him aside for the next. If a chief's sons are too young to govern, his brother or next relative succeeds him and continues chief until his death, when the office reverts to the son of the elder. . . . With the exception of a very few men of whom reputation for courage or sagacity is considerable, and who influence is in consequence extended over a tribe, their nominal chiefs have no control beyond their own petty bands, nor is it potent even there."

Contributions to Indian Ethnology, pp. 184-85.

The reason for this anarchic state may have resulted from incomplete assimilation. Tribal organization as opposed to the informal organization of village life was not native to the Indians of the Interior Plateau. It was a Plains trait superimposed once contact between the two cultures was made possible by the advent of the horse during the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Ray, Cultural Relations, p. 14.

It should be noted that an entirely different regimen was imposed once the tribe was organized for the hunt. Although writing somewhat later, Ronan observed:

> "When the warriors set out on their hunting excursions to the buffalo plains, he assumed the supreme command, which he exercised with despotic sway until their return. He carried a long whip with a thick handle, decorated with scalps and feathers and generally appointed two active warriors as aides de camp. On their advance toward the enemy he always took the lead, and on their return he brought up the rear. Great regularity was observed during the march, and if any of the tribe fell out of the ranks or committed any other breach of discipline, he instantly received a flagellation from the whip of the war whip of the war chieftain."

Historical Sketch, p. 10.

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[8] Bancroft added this observation regarding the role of the chief among the Salishan that he was an ex officio kind of priest presiding over observance in which the Sun is worshipped. Bancroft, Native Races (5 vols.; San Francisco, 1882), III, 154.

Point added:

> "But once the hunt begins the grand chief has the most responsibility on his shoulders. He must lead the group, choose the campsites, show to everyone an example of courage and vigilance. The heads of families stand guard at night and hunt during the day. The young people pass their time doing nothing and at night they enjoy undisturbed sleep. The little children eat and amuse themselves from morning to night. Strangely, they never seem to quarrel."

Wilderness Kingdom, p. 147.

[9] The many functionaries besides the hereditary head chief were each given the title Imigum. Bancroft, Native Races, III, 155.

But nevertheless, in years past the Flatheads had some kind of great leader not only in name, but one who also forced submission whenever he was not obeyed. The oldest members of the tribe can still recount many of the details.

As a result of the instructions provided by the Iroquois, the Flatheads learned to distinguish more clearly between good and evil.[11] The leaders began to persuade them and to punish the more guilty with blows as stinging as those used to whip a horse.[12] This punishment resulted

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[10] According to Ross Cox, the code of morals, "although short, is comprehensive. . . . They say that honesty, bravery, love of truth, attention to parents, obedience to their chief, and affection for their wives and children are the principal virtues which entitle them the place of happiness, while the opposite vices condemn them to that of misery." Cox, Adventures on the Columbia, p. 127.

[11] Elliott advances a unique counter-argument against the Iroquois influence. He notes the much earlier arrival of the Bible-carrying mountain man, Jedediah Smith. It is suggested that it was he who planted the seeds for the future Flathead delegation. Elliott, "Religion Among the Flatheads," pp. 1-8.

[12] Some researchers claim that flogging appeared around 1700. For almost two hundred years one of the most important symbols of chieftainship was the whip, a long lash made of buckskin loaded with buckshot. Informants say that one hundred lashes with the loaded whip laid on by a muscular chief was as severe as the judicial execution and exile which it replaced. Turney-High, Flathead Indians of Montana, p. 47.

Corroborating commentary such as the following is abundant on the subject:

> "The custom of whipping has existed among the Flatheads from time immemorial. They consider it a necessary atonement for offences committed and they

from conviction rather than authority. It became so firmly entrenched and was so widely respected among the Flatheads that they not only allowed themselves to be punished by their leaders, but they would often request to be flogged, convinced that only in that way could they regain their reputations.[13] After the arrival of the missionary, the guilty easily made the transition from these punishments to the penances imposed in confession.[14]

> often present themselves voluntarily to the chief and ask to receive it for even private transgressions. When pagans they believed it wiped out the guilt of the action for which it was inflicted and made full satisfaction for it, and long after their conversion it was no easy matter to convince some of them that they were obliged to confess the sins for which they had thus been punished."

O'Connor, "Flathead Indians," p. 107.

[13] The "gastigo," as Mengarini refers to it, is further described by Father Palladino.

> "In a most solemn manner the chiefs and head men of the tribe conducted a 'kind of general assizes of open court' in the presence of the whole tribe. At this assembly it was not uncommon for offenders against the mores of the group to come forward of their own free will, even before any accusation had been placed against them, and they would confess their wrong-doing and ask for the proper punishment. Others were brought before the court by the accusing person or proper authorities. In any case the chief decided the matter then and there, and his sentence was immediately carried out."

Palladino, Indian and White in the Northwest, p. 100.

[14] Unfortunately, the penitential features of the missionaries' creed eventually served to reinforce such punitive action. In the 1870's, Baptiste the Lean, a kind of assistant chief to the Flatheads, offered an observation in this vein:

> "Some of the white people, I am told, talk against our custom of whipping Indians. Our chief, at the

From the beginning the missionaries directed all their efforts toward encouraging submission to the tribal leaders, making clear to the latter their obligation to watch over the conduct of their citizens, and expounding upon the power of these chiefs before the citizens. But despite all their efforts, only in recent times have they been capable to obtain some slight results, but it really is on the one hand the native indolence of the savage which forces the chiefs to almost constant inaction. On the other hand, the obstinacy of the citizens trained since childhood to do always as they please does not favorably dispose them toward the simplest admonitions.

From this state of affairs rise many grave consequences which in themselves would be enough to destroy a missionary's morale. The leaders themselves complain that the citizens do not listen to them, but they will not believe that they themselves are the reason. If asked how they behaved in the past, the chiefs who consider them-

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Bitter Root, told us last year not to whip them, but to put them in prison. What, then, are we to do? All the chiefs have given up whipping, but I continue to whip bad Indians. I have learned from the priests, from the beginning, that it right to whip them, and I shall never give up doing so. Many are opposed to me because of this. Having once taken God's hand, I will not let it go. I am sure the priests approve of my whipping bad Indians. I have always done the priest's bidding, even at the risk of my life, because I loved the Church. I am not afraid of my priests. That's all."

O'Connor, "Records of the Flatheads," p. 105.

selves strong answer that on occasion they themselves would go with club or gun in hand in order to enforce obedience. But if we reply, "Why do you not do the same now," the only response is a profound silence and a raised eyebrow. Who is it who blinds them?[15]

In addition to the apathy already referred to there is a tendency toward faulty judgment which until now has been impossible to destroy notwithstanding the many oft repeated instructions on this subject. Besides, a chief who is honest and who may wish to please will not make a move in matters affecting another individual, will not utter a word implying the slightest criticism if it causes another pain. And why? In order to avoid feeling ill at ease, and in order that the other party have no cause to complain of injury. Therefore, every specific criticism, even one made by a father of his son, is considered evil speech.[16]

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[15] An explanation of this weakened relationship is provided by Masson, who observed: "They are all remarkably proud of being great men but still they have little or no influence over the others . . . after making the father a chief, you are sometimes obliged to do the same with his son in order to secure his aid, for the former has not the power to secure it for you." L. Redrique Masson, Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Oest (2 vols.; Paris, 1889), II, 278.

The above suggests that the instability of bands during the middle of the nineteenth century may have been, at least in part, related to the competitive fur trade which undermined the chief's monopoly of the highly valued white trade goods. Once the young men did not have to depend upon their chiefs and elders for their liquor, for example, one of the economic bases of the chiefs' authority vanished. The prestige and authority of a chief was one of the most important reasons for a man changing his band membership.

The Flatheads confuse crudely zealous behavior with violence. For example, if a woman has forcefully rejected a man tempting her to evil action, she will immediately rush crying and sobbing to the missionary to accuse herself of having spoken harshly when alarmed. And we are not without those women who will go to chiefs for a flogging in order to lessen the guilt they feel.

Now, excluding their official roles, the conduct of the Flathead chiefs is reprehensible. They do not even place themselves in a position to be perturbed, being satisfied with giving orders and exhorting in vague words and generalities. Even if the orders were not followed and consequently the entire tribe suffered, they would see themselves as having done too much once have said: "*Tas-*

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[16] This consideration toward others is still evident within the culture. Flatheads are very careful to add "please" to any request, and carefully make the distinction between "you" and "thou" contained in the Salishan grammar. In fact, the intimate "you" is rarely used. Because of this reticence to offend, Flathead social control rests primarily upon ridicule. "The mirrored self to the Flathead is the most important self." Turney-High, *Flathead Indians of Montana*, p. 44.

The Flathead was equally outstanding for his hospitality. Rappagliosi wrote: "A virtue of this tribe is its rule of hospitality which is vigorously pursued. Every savage who finds himself some distance from his dwelling, or even if he merely wishes, may go and sleep and eat in another lodge with no more ceremony than raising the buffalo skin over the entrance, entering, and seating or stretching himself as he pleases." *Memorie*, pp. 105-06.

gest, it is not good." One such weak procedure greatly hinders the growth of the mission and it has forced the missionaries to urge the great chiefs to appoint new leaders who are more adept in controlling the citizens.[17]

As a result, the actual government of the Flatheads has been structured as follows: a great leader or king; a prefect or master of the camp who is immediately responsible for the government of the citizens. All of these have a substitute or adjutant. Six of the eldest tribesmen serve as counselors to the first three, and twenty brave young warriors, selected from the best in the tribe, are always prepared to follow the orders of the master of the camp or in his absence his substitute.

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[17] Mengarini speaks feelingly on the weakness of governmental leadership as a result of his own experiences of the year before. The selection from his letter, included as Appendix F, emphasizes the ineffectiveness of the chiefs and the council in combatting the schism perpetrated by Little Faro in 1847.

CHAPTER X

CHALLENGES FACING THE MISSIONARY

Certainly many would be deceived into thinking that once the first difficulty had been surmounted, all else solves itself in the savage mission. Instead the development of such missions, and especially those of the Flatheads, encounter many obstacles. What we have described of their government is but one and by no means the greatest. Many others, one more difficult than the next, are still to be surmounted.

The hunt, for example, is one.[1] It alone causes an indescribable amount of damage and waste. It is not an exaggeration, but rather from the experience of many years that I claim that this single factor is enough to render completely useless and without fruit all the efforts of a missionary to train their souls and to civilize them. First of all, the nomadic, vagabond life which they are forced to pursue as in times past, adhering to those ancient ideas, causes them to remain in their savage state. Furthermore, the passions which slumbered while they dwelt in villages are reawakened even more strongly during the hunt. Occasions of sin are not lacking, for the devil does not sleep. It is certain that in a single summer hunt more sins are committed than during three full years of village life. In addition, all the traditional teachings and whatever else they have learned are completely forgotten. Whether a missionary accompanies them or not, it is impossible for them to receive new instructions. The leaders even if they attempted to, cannot at all oversee their subjects during this time.[2] Consequently, upon the savages' return, the missionary discovers numerous spiritual scars, many of them incurable, incurred during the hunting season. In disappointment he is forced to begin everything all over again as if it were the first day of instruction.[3] To understand how this occurs, it is best to know how the hunt is conducted.

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[1] According to some contemporary observers, the significance of the buffalo transcended economic considerations. Point wrote:

> "The buffalo is for the Indian, at least insofar as he is superstitious, something more than manna in the dessert. Hence, all his efforts are bent toward procuring the buffalo. I almost said that all his desires are directed toward the buffalo. For there is no fatigue he will not endure, no enemy he will not defy, no form of death he will not face to get the great beasts. This is proven by the fact that the Flatheads have gone into Blackfoot territory to hunt."

Point, Wilderness Kingdom, p. 120.

During this period the preferred hunting ground of the Flatheads was along the Mussellshell, and the adjacent valley of the Yellowstone. They also often coursed the edges of the Missouri, and at times went as far south as Fort Hall. Turney-High, Flatheads of Montana, p. 117.

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[2] When writing of the buffalo hunt Father Michael Accolti observed: "They [the Flatheads] spend at least half the year at the hunt in pursuit of buffalo. During this time they have none of the ministrations which could be offered to them by an accompanying priest." Accolti to Roothaan, Santa Clara, California, February 29, 1850, MS, Jesuit Archives, Gonzaga University.

Since wild life becomes more rare each year, the Flatheads are forced to break up into bands in order to search them out. With particular frequency these bands are joined by savages of other nations for mutual protection, including the Pend d'Oreilles, Nez Perce, Spokan, etc.[4] But let us exclude those who have not received the missionary's instruction. Let us instead speak of those who have. The Flatheads, once on the trail, are always out of their tents before sunrise.[5] They untether the horses which have been hobbled during the night, and as a precaution against enemies they follow the horses to pasture with rifle in hand.[6] There they remain until the women have broken camp and have prepared for departure. While the women load the horses, the men still unfed, with rifles in hand, mount their horses and disappear.[7] Dispersing in groups of three, or five, or ten together, they ride at some distance from each other until they reach the summit in pursuit of a deer or roe-buck and also in watchful anticipation of the enemy as they continue their search for buffalo.[8] Returning to camp after nightfall, the members of the company eat a piece of raw or cooked meat, if they have bagged some game. If not, they relieve their hunger with some roots and fall asleep in order to pursue the same maneuver on the morrow.

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[3] Father Point focuses upon an entirely different reaction to the temptations of the hunt. He writes of the Flathead:

> "More mistrustful of themselves than ever as they left for their hunt, they felt a need for adding three new invocations to their pious practices. The invocations were: ' St. Michael, pray for us; St. Raphael, pray for us; St. Hubert, pray for us.' These three were chosen because they had learned that St. Michael was the protector of the brave; St. Raphael, the guide of travelers; and St. Hubert, the patron of hunters."

Wilderness Kingdom, p. 181.

Point goes on to liken the summer hunt to a pious pilgrimage during which the chiefs and the elite of the braves led the way to the communion rail. He concludes by observing that by the end of the hunt only one old woman had failed to go to Confession. Ibid., p. 47; Point, "Recollections of the Rocky Mountain Missions," pp. 298-321.

[4] Several early observers note that the greatest perils of the hunt lay in contact with strangers unsympathetic to the religion of the Flathead.

Fortunately, in the 1840's inter-tribal hunts became more rare. The Nez Perce, for example, recognized the Flathead as the better hunter. He could be relied upon to go out onto the Plains in winter and return with surplus meat products for which the Nez Perce could simply trade. Turney-High, Flatheads of Montana, pp. 136-37.

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[5] For purposes of mutual protection the lodges were pitched as close together as possible, the position of the tent in the circle being assigned by the sub-chief. Pitching the lodges was a task easily accomplished by a woman in fifteen minutes. Vernon D. Malan, "Language and Social Change Among the Flathead Indians" (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Montana State University, 1948), p. 46.

[6] Only the band's herd, or secondary horses, were kept in a fenced camp ring. Each man's prized hunting horse, or the primary horses, were tethered by a foreleg in front of the owner's tent. He would then be taken to the hill pasture, where the owner would patiently guard him for an hour as he grazed, before returning to breakfast. Ibid., p. 57.

The hunting horse was grazed each day before all else, because of his overweening economic importance. Linked to the horse complex were the number of bison robes a family possessed. It took horses to acquire and to transport a large number. Turney-High, Flathead Indians of Montana, p. 132.

[7] The morning meal generally consisted of dried meat, camas, bitterroot, and berries. If fresh meat was available, some of it might be boiled or roasted. A portion of food was placed either on leaves or grass or in a large pine knot bowl. Their long hair served as a towel for wiping their hands after eating. Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XXVII, 300.

While the braves are thus dispersed upon the mountainsides, the rest of the camp, mostly composed of women and children and an occasional elderly chief, establish another camp ground. As soon as the horses are unloaded, the women begin to cut wood for the fires as well as for the construction of horse corrals, so that when the missionary issues the call to prayer, he is greeted by none save some old women and children.[9] The men and above all the young braves, who are, as a matter of fact, those in most need of instruction, are either guarding the horses or still scattered upon the mountainside. It is no better when they have killed a buffalo or when they are in camp; the guarding of the horses never ceases.[10] Consequently, amidst the labor of the savages with whom he finds himself, the missionary is superfluous, save as a witness to all the misery that befalls them without in any way being able to relieve it.

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[8] Father Point embellishes this account of the buffalo hunt by adding:

> "When buffalo are discovered, and the enemy fails to appear, the scout returns hastily. As soon as he is in sight of the camp, he opens his robe wide and lifts his rifle into the air to indicate that game has been discovered. At this sign the whole camp rejoices in proportion to the length of their fast, which has often lasted several weeks. The scout arrives, takes his seat in silence, and the calumet is passed to him. After solemnly inhaling a puff, he tells what he has seen. The chief then stands among the lodges and solemnly announces: 'My children, let us thank the Great Spirit, for game has been discovered.'"

Wilderness Kingdom, p. 121.

During the hunt, the Salish aimed his arrow at the back of the bison's shoulder in hope of its piercing his heart. If, however, this was impossible, the kidney was pierced, despite the consequent tendency to embitter the meat. Malan, "Language and Social Change Among the Flathead," p. 39.

For example, the youths who were reasonably tract-able in the villages, during the hunt become as obstinate and hardheaded as the buffalo. Often when they discover a herd of buffalo, instead of informing their leaders, according to custom and strict rule, they attack the herd, shouting like wolves in their enthusiasm, killing several and causing the rest to flee thirty or forty miles away. Thus they force the entire camp to go hungry. If they learn that another nation is encamped nearby, they hurry there, and one will return with one woman, who will remain there during the rest of the hunt, and God knows the rest.[11] Without ennumerating all of the temporal sins which the hunt occasions, be assured that in addition to those described, the savages commit all the rest.

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[9] The old people worked busily around the camp at such tasks as they were capable of performing. The men would braid bison-hair ropes or make drinking horns and stone pounders or toys for the children, while the women looked after the children or assisted in tending the meat as it dried on the smoke stacks. Ibid., p. 60.

[10] The Flathead had comparatively large herds of horses, which were notably superior in stamina and quickness to most Indian cayuses. This may in part result from the fact that before the coming of the white man the Flathead used to castrate their horses even with flint knives, realizing that, if gelded after maturity, the horse would retain more of the vigor of the stallion.

As a result, traders came in the 1850s to barter for these fine animals. One, Van Etten, came all the way from Salt Lake City to procure horses for the Pony Express, an organization that required the best. A Blackfoot brave once told Governor Isaac Stevens that he "stole" the first Flathead horse that he came across--it was sure to be a good one. Woody, Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana, I, 148.

While on the hunt, some fall from their horses and die. Others remain crippled the rest of their lives. Others drink putrified, stagnant water and succumb to infection.[12] Others are blinded by the snow and dust.

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[11] The acquisition of female war captives was almost as honorable as the capture of a horse. It was accompanied by shouting and rejoicing in camp, since her work value was of economic importance to the members of the tribe. Of course, to this could be added her often prized estate as a sexual partner in concubinage to the chief or the foremost braves. Turney-High, Flathead Indians of Montana, pp. 130-31.

On some occasions snatch police returned renegade braves to the chief in order to receive a flogging for having perhaps affected inter-tribal policy. Ibid., p. 118.

[12] A tragic instance of this problem is related by Mengarini:

> "It was about this time [1847] that the Indians as usual went hunting. It happened, however, that one

What can be added then of the encounter of the Flatheads with their enemies?[13] War occurs almost every year, and often more frequently. The number of widows, having lost their young husbands in battle, multiplies in number. Without question, war, far more than the hunt, continues to keep the savages fierce and barbarous, rendering them incapable of fixing their attention upon the faith which they have embraced.

The infestation by Blackfeet presents yet another serious impediment to the progress of the mission.[14] For

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day they were sadly in need of water, and, though they searched long and earnestly, were unable to find any. At length they came upon a stagnant pool, and, urged by thirst, many of the less prudent drank deeply. Soon they began to complain of feeling unwell, and after a few days some died. Others grew thin and weak, and reached home in an exhausted condition. Having inquired into the matter, I became convinced that the evil lay in the water which had been drunk and I administered purgatives to the sufferers. My convictions were true. The number saved, however, was small, for the sick had perished before reaching home."
Partoll, "Mengarini's Narrative," p. 266.

[13] A by-product of the horse culture complex was that once a band of these hunters encountered an enemy tribe, the tendency was to steal their horses first of all, and as a result of this, "there often are some wounded and some killed." Rappagliosi, Memorie, p. 87.

In fact, the verb generally used for "going to war" literally means "stealing horses." Furthermore, the term "horse-thief" was an honorable one to the Flathead for it signified "warrior." Turney-High, Flatheads of Montana, p. 62.

[14] The Blackfoot was a comparatively recent adversary. In 1720 the tribe was still in Canada. As it moved south and west during the remainder of the century, the tribesmen acquired guns from the Hudson's Bay Company Traders.

our savages, horses represent wealth and life.[15] Without them they are unable to procure the necessities of survival, hence their importance.[16] Thus attracted, enemies will not leave them alone. Each year they successfully flee with a great quantity of Flathead horses. In order to lose as few as possible, the Flatheads are forced to maintain continuous surveillance during all seasons of the year, and consequently remain in the grazing fields almost all day.

But they still had no horses. A fuller commentary upon this appears in Chapter Five of the Introduction. Erna Gunther, "Westward Movement of Some Plains Traits," American Anthropologist, LII (April-June, 1950), 178.

A central reason for this conflict was that the Flatheads' right to hunt on the Plains was bitterly denied by the Blackfoot. Repeatedly, reciprocal economic treaties were made with the Piegan for the Flathead to hunt through their territory in exchange for the right to gather vegetable food lacking on the Plains. But because the lax social organization of the Algonkian savages contained no authority for making and enforcing "international" agreements, perpetual economic war existed between the two with the advantage going to the Flatheads by reason of their greater resourcefulness and military sagacity. Turney-High, Flathead Indians of Montana, p. 116.

[15] With the introduction of the horse complex, the wealth concept becomes an equine concept. Only a man rich in horses could acquire a large supply of pemmican. Only he could pack it home and trade it for other articles. Ibid., p. 105.

[16] Merriam suggests that the Flathead adopted the horse as a means of transportation between 1710 and 1735. It was after this that it became customary to make one or two trips to the Plains each year to hunt buffalo. On these trips the Flathead came into contact with Plains people, particularly the Blackfoot, who became "traditional" enemies. Merriam, Ethnomusicology of the Flathead Indians, p. 124.

This is not only detrimental to their spiritual life, but it also makes them physically ill. Many die of consumption induced by the cold. Nevertheless, this care is often ineffective, because in the dark of night the enemy stealthily enters the village, cuts the ropes holding the horses, mounts them and escapes.[17]

From what we have outlined arises the cause of another great obstacle to our spiritual instruction. Those who guard the horses during the day are in fact the youths who would be the hope of the missionary since they are more easily trained and more responsive to instruction. A missionary who today may be catechizing fifty families, tomorrow may have only ten among whom he may find only one or two of the fifty he instructed before.

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[17] Those at St. Mary's also commented upon the seriousness of the Blackfoot problem. Brother Claessens narrated:

> "The Blackfeet were a great trouble to us. So much so that at 3 miles from the mission we were not sure of our lives. Brother Joseph [Specht] and I spent many a weary night in sharp lookout on the top of our bastions with our guns. Fr. DeSmet bade me never to undress at night, and to make a wooden cannon to keep the Blackfeet away."

Claessens to [?], n.d., cited in Bischoff, Jesuits in Old Oregon, p. 67.

Another incident which served to perpetuate this hostility is described in Father Point's narrative. He wrote:

> "On January 10, the Blackfeet visited us during the night. The next day a party of Flatheads met and spoke with them, but they were mutually too suspicious to shake hands. The Flatheads had reason for their reserve. The following night seven of their horses disappeared."

Wilderness Kingdom, p. 151.

Without a doubt, all these difficulties are serious and will not cease until the Flatheads will have the wherewithal to live and clothe themselves within their villages. Otherwise it seems assured that a mission established amidst a people increasingly compelled to withdraw, will find itself as it was in the beginning, even if it lasts a hundred years.

Even the Flatheads who possess no great wisdom understand this fact, and for some time have had the greatest desire to stop leading a life which could be called a continuing death. There have been many who without outside urging have disposed of their horses and their peltries in order to purchase a cow or two from the white men and build themselves a wooden house. Alone they have begun to till their little farms. Yet this itself places them in the arms of extremity, because on the one hand, one or two cows and a small farm are not sufficient to feed and clothe an entire family.[18] On the other hand, they cannot

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[18] Four years after the sale of the mission property, George Gibbs observed that the Flathead "lived together by the hunt, and do not manifest any disposition to agricultural pursuits or fixed residence. . . . They have at the station a village of log houses, but notwithstanding generally prefer their own lodges." Gibbs, Report of Explorations, I, 415-16.

Nevertheless, Gibbs at another point observed that some of the first herds of cattle in Montana were possessed by Flathead. They procured most of them from men who traded for worn-out stock along the Oregon Trail late in the 1840s and who wintered the animals in the relative safety of Flathead Country. Ibid., p. 323.

By 1890, it is reported that there were 20,000 head abandon their animals. In any case it is best to leave in order to avoid starvation. But they cannot leave for they have sold their horses. Placed in this incredibly discouraging position, what should they do? Sell their cow; abandon their small farm? Will they again throw themselves into farming, or will they withdraw ever more into the forests, rarely being seen and always becoming more savage?

The indifference of the parents toward the education of their children is yet another obstacle.[19] If the missionary could at least have the youths within earshot, if not near him, he could perhaps achieve something by guiding them. But this is in fact impossible. Consequently, the children grow up with the same habits, defects and vices as their parents. Fortunate indeed is that child possessing a mother and father who are wholly committed to their faith and who have entirely renounced their ancient traditions, and in all ways follow the instruction of the missionary. Such circumstances are but rare.

As soon as a boy reaches five or six years of age,

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of cattle being run by the Flatheads at the Jocko Reservation. Malan, "Language and Social Change," p. 119.

[19] Other researchers agree that the Flathead did not take the prepubertal education of his offspring seriously. Although he was bound to provide for his offspring's training in the tribal mores. But with adolescence both boys and girls were given serious training for adult responsibility. Turney-High, Flatheads of Montana, pp. 76-81.

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he leaves his tent with bow and arrow in hand each morning after having prayed and having eaten. In the company of other youngsters he ventures into the meadow, not returning until dusk when neither mother nor father will ask him where he went, nor with whom, nor what he did.[20] When a son reaches fourteen, his parents are completely unable to command him. Their only recourse is to entreat him. If he refuses, as ordinarily happens, the mother and father are forced to satisfy their own entreaty. This in turn encourages an increasing arrogance and insurmountable obstinacy in their children.

Now let us assume that the missionary performs his duty, firmly instructing the parents as well as the children, punishing this one or that one by depriving him of Holy Communion, which for the savages is the greatest punishment. The missionary will achieve something as long as they remain in the village, but once having left, the one will cease his watchfulness, the other his obedience. Upon their return the missionary is forced to begin anew with the same instruction and the same penances. And when the parents decide to condemn the already excessive insolence of their children, the youths having grown older, rebel against their parents and mounting their horse simply move two or three hundred miles away.

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[20] The fact that children were allowed to roam in the forest can be explained by the fact that the adults in the culture began early to inculcate the concept of the "guardian spirit" into the young boys and, to a lesser extent, the girls. When they were still very young, the children were sent by their fathers on unimportant missions purely for the sake of training the children by forcing them to find their way around in the forests. Forbis, "Religious Acculturation of the Flathead Indians," p. 21.

Another obstacle is presented by the women.[21] From the beginning we encountered two most unseemly traits among the Flatheads. One was that men cruelly mistreated their wives, beating them and placing them beneath their feet, often causing the death of children yet unborn. The other problem was that some women were such masters over their men, that the latter were not allowed to manage even the smallest household detail or manner of living. At morning and evening the wife served portions of food to both husband and children. This not infrequently aroused the ire of the husband, for if his wife was displeased with him, he was certain to pass the day without eating, or at best to receive a few animal entrails as would befit a dog.

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[21] The weakness of familial relationships is also a point of critical consideration for George Gibbs, who wrote:

> "Domestic affection cannot be considered strong among these races. The ties between parent and child, husband and wife, seem little closer than between more distant relatives, or even others of the same tribe. Indeed, the term naika tilicum (my relation, or one of my people), is more often in their mouths than any denoting nearer kin."

Gibbs, Report of Explorations, I, 198.

Both the easily dissolved marital relationship and the tendency toward polygamy could be explained easily in economic terms. The economic advantages of such an arrangement are evident in the critical observations which Elkanah Walker offered regarding Indian marriage customs of a neighboring tribe. In a letter written to the Reverend David Greene on September 12, 1889, he wrote:

> "The more wives they [the Spokans] have the richer they consider themselves. Their wives are to them what slaves are to the planter as it is their business to provide provisions. . . . They are continually changing their wives--throwing away one and taking another.

Drury, Elkanah and Mary Walker, p. 129.

The missionaries pressed their attack against these abuses. The men being more reasonable surrendered easily, and completely abandoned their barbarous treatment, so that we never again heard of abortions caused by their maltreatment. But since the Flathead women possess most difficult and inconstant natures, we were unable to achieve but the slightest consideration regarding their husbands. The ancient custom of female despotism consequently still exists in its entirety.[22]

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[22] Father Joseph Joset made a similar observation regarding the Indians along the Columbia, writing:

> "Among them it is no rare occurrence to see a woman step in during council and severely upbraid the chief. This is easily explained: before the fisheries at the mouth of the Columbia had intercepted the salmon, the only trouble of the men the whole year round was to put up the fishery; every evening distribution was made to the women, as it was their lot to dry it and prepare it in different ways--in a few weeks there was great abundance of it; it was the exclusive property of the squaw, as well as the roots and berries she had provided. She went too for rushes which she manufactured into mats to build her lodge. She traded the provisions not needed for all other necessaries even for horses, so that the house and almost all its contents were her exclusive property, so exclusive indeed that the husband could not help himself to the provisions in the absence of the wife

The men do nothing but slay the animals. These, once killed, immediately pass into the control of the women who dispose as they wish of both the meat and the fur. Since not only the clothes they wear but almost everything else, including the tent, the saddles, the sacks, cords, etc., belong to the women, it is useless to ask a man if he has supplies or skins. He will answer that he knows nothing about it. It is best to question his wife.[23]

> without incurring the accusation of being a thief. She would starve him into compliance or say, 'Go away, I have no need of thee,' and even take her axe to forcibly drive him away."

Joseph Joset, S.J., "Chronology of the Rocky Mountain Indians, Joset Papers, Box XXXIV, Jesuit Archives, Gonzaga University.

Other evidence negates this assertion. To the contrary, other accounts portray the Flathead woman as a paragon of industrious docility. Father Point offered the following picture:

> "During the march to the hunting grounds, the women are in charge of the baggage. To keep the pack animals together and moving forward, they are obliged to run up and down along the line of march. All the while, the women must also care for the children who are too young to fend for themselves. When a pole works loose, or a horse stumbles or becomes mired or loses his load, the women must dismount and take care of the problem. . . . When the company reaches a campsite, the women are obliged to erect the lodges, cut the wood, and prepare the food. They must do this in spite of fatigue or injuries or illness or even increases in their families. But, remarkably, during the entire course of the hunt, a period of three months, not a single one of them showed any impatience."

Point, Wilderness Kingdom, p. 150. Also refer to Chapter I of the "Memorie" where Mengarini notes the desirability of Flathead wives among white trappers.

[23] In explanation of the wife's economic supremacy it should be noted that women were included in the hunt after the introduction of the horse in order to dress and preserve the buffalo meat which could now be stored in greater

There are a number of women who own a wooden house, a cow or two, and perhaps are owners of something else as well.[24]

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quantities. Gunther, "Westward Movement of Some Plains Traits," p. 178.

From the moment the hunter deposited the game with his wife, it was legally hers, and all therefrom as well. For example, from the skins she made the covers for the tents which in theory she owned. Turney-High, Flatheads of Montana, pp. 91, 100.

Father Rappagliosi specifically accounts for the use of many of these hides in constructing the Flathead dwelling. He described it as a bell, "conical in shape, covered with buffalo skins, with an opening at the top to release the smoke. At the center [of the interior] burns the fire, around which are additional hides, upon which they [the Flatheads] pass the days and sleep at night." Memorie, p. 81.

These habitations of the Flathead were common to all the prairie Indians, according to a contemporary observer. They were covered with dressed skins of the buffalo, although some of them were made from cotton cloth procured from the fur traders. The lodges were usually from 14 to 25 feet in diameter at the base and almost the same in height. The fire is made in the center of this circular lodge, the smoke escaping through an aperture at the top.

Each person living in the lodge was appointed a place to sleep, which he also occupied during the day. The master or owner occupied a place either to the right or the left of the entrance, while a guest was usually placed at the opposite side. A. M. Quivey, ed., "Bradley Manuscript Book F," Contributions to Historical Society of Montana, VIII (1917), 203.

[24] Some have further ascribed this female dominance to the increasingly diminished number of men as a result of warfare--a point made by Mengarini. Others have added to the obvious economic advantage women presented, the fact that the Salishan culture was basically matrilineal.

On the other hand, recent research by Ray has indicated no such matriarchal structure. This would be predictable in terms of the cultural characteristics of unspecialized hunters and gatherers as indeed the Flatheads were. To prove his point, Ray adds that even today the Flathead hunter's wife strictly avoids the rear of the lodge where the meat is first brought in. Ray, Culture Elements, p. 127.

Among the greatest difficulties encountered in developing this mission is the presence of white men, even white Catholics, who in the estimation of the savages are incomparably courageous.[25] Because it was covetous desire which led these white Catholics to the lands of the Flatheads, it is almost impossible to find among them any who are loyal in the practice of their faith.[26] Thus the savage is constantly exposed to moral scandal. They have, consequently, learned to swear in French, in English, and to cheat in the others.

Despite the Flatheads' traditional habits and the other grave difficulties which have rendered the mission at Saint Mary's a difficult one, we cannot deny that with all these efforts we have still scored a few victories, and the devil has witnessed some great defeats.

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[25] The corrupting influence of the whites is also warned against by De Smet:

> "Caution against all immediate intercourse with the whites, even with the workmen, whom necessity compels us to employ, for though these are not wicked, still they are far from possessing the qualities necessary to serve as models to men who are humble enough to think that they are more or less perfect in proportion, as their conduct corresponds with that of the whites."

Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XXVII, 296.

[26] In a hypothetical statement of Indian thinking on this issue, George Simpson had the red man say: "It is not for your Cloth and Blankets that we undergo all this labor and fatigue . . . but it is the prospect of a Drink in the Spring . . . that carries us through the winter and induces us to work so hard." In this dramatization of the "philosophy of rum" Simpson makes the Indian himself admit that, at bottom, spirits alone make him toil. Saum, The Fur Trader and the Indian, p. 168.

Of the medicine known as magic we no longer even speak.[27] The hand game which often ruined entire families has been entirely abandoned for five years at least.[28]

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[27] One might question the accuracy of Mengarini's observation in light of the problems others have encountered in discussing the Flathead magic. As Turney-High says:

> "A conscientious ethnographer cannot get a compendium of trustworthy sumesh dreams. Only the completely acculturized or untrustworthy will discuss the matter. Sumesh was, and among honest Indians still is, strictly a matter of personal property. . . . No Flathead who sincerely thinks he has sumesh is going to give this to an ethnographer except under circumstances of extraordinary friendship or filial relation. To ask a Flathead to describe his medicine experience is considered an unforgiveable impertinence. Therefore, although the writer has heard several alleged sumesh songs and has been told of some purported medicine experiences, he considers them utterly unreliable."

Flatheads of Montana, p. 28.

Such silence might as well suggest a certain reticence on the part of the Flatheads to make the priests privy to their secret customs. Despite the fact that such silence would be predictable, Father De Smet also admired their apparent disavowel of these customs, for he wrote:

> "Not a vestige of their former superstitions can be discovered. Their confidence in us is unlimited. They believe without any difficulty the most profound mysteries of our holy religion, as soon as they are proposed to them, and they do not even suspect that we might be deceived, or even could wish to deceive them."

Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XXVII, 288.

[28] George Gibbs, a traveler through the old Oregon Country and frequently a correspondent with Father Mengarini, offered the following description of the hand game in 1887.

> "There are several games, the principle of which is the same. In one, a small piece of bone is passed rapidly from hand to hand, shifted behind the back,

Nevertheless, during the hunt there are continuing occasions of sin and during these times when they are reunited with other tribes, the savages have bad example continually displayed before their eyes. Polygamy has not existed for years. Of the many shameful sins [committed] during the time they dwelt in the village, we no longer speak.[29] Work has replaced the extreme laziness which existed among the men. And not only do we count skilled workmen among the

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> etc., and the object of the contending party being to ascertain in which hand it is held. Each side is furnished with five or ten small sticks, which serve to mark the game, one stick being given by the guesser whenever he loses, and received whenever he wins. On guessing correctly, it is his turn to manipulate. When all the sticks are won, the game ceases, and the winner receives the stakes, consisting of clothing or any other articles, as the play may be either high or low, for simple amusement or in eager rivalry. The backers of the party manipulating keep up a constant drumming with the sticks on their paddles which lie before them, singing an incantation to attract good fortune. This is usually known as the game of the hand, or, in jargon, It-lu-kam."

Gibbs, "Tribes of Western Washington and Northwestern Oregon," p. 206.

[29] Apparently, the lessons taught by the Black Robes were not forgotten. In 1879 an official Indian Agent's report noted that:

> "All of the Indians on this reservation [Jocko] are brought under the influence of religion and are practical Catholics. Polygamy is punished as a crime by tribal law, and the marriage rite, which is in every case performed by missionaries, is respected and enforced."

Ronan, Historical Sketch of the Flathead Indian, p. 94. (Italics supplied.)

adults, but children of eight or ten manage an axe very well, providing all the firewood used in the mission.[30]

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[30] Those young men who had been raised at the mission had been brought up as farmers. Joset observed that they acquired new habits. Most of all they were attached to the house. Joseph Joset, S.J., "Chronology of the Rocky Mountain Missions," Joset Papers, Box XCVI, Jesuit Archives, Gonzaga University.

CHAPTER XI

FAITH OF THE FLATHEADS

Since the Flatheads are fervently devoted to religion, they place great emphasis upon all related to it. On all occasions they perform the rituals in an excellent manner.[1] The rosary, medals, and the scapular have discouraged a great number of sins.[2] These three items constantly hang on their breasts. Such importance is placed upon them that when they are lost, even grown men cry in sorrow. Reciting prayers and singing is their life. With the exception of those who stand guard in the tents, all the others run to the church at the first peel of the bell each morning and evening. *For the Flatheads each day is Sunday*:[3] this expression was included in an eyewitness account of an Anglican minister, who marveled at the great wealth of our church.[4] The congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, devoted to the conversion of sinners, was established among the Flatheads on Whitsunday last year, 1847, but it was already more than a year that we had been preparing for this event, particularly with our prayers. But our natives do not know what it means to have patience and to do the will of God. As a result they sometimes come to the missionary complaining that it is the same. This one or that one for whom they are praying refuses to be converted.

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[1] A scene described by Right Reverend James O'Connor, Bishop of Omaha, witnessed during a visit to the Flathead Indians in 1877, reveals how complete and long-lived were the changes in custom wrought by the missionaries.

> "A procession is filing out of the church and singing what I take to be the Miserere. It is, however, I am told, a dirge these Indians, whilst yet Pagans, used to sing at the funerals of their dead warriors, arranged by one of the early missionaries and adapted to the Christian hymn to which I am now listening. The men go first, the women follow. Then comes the bier we had seen in the church borne by four men, its light burden covered with a black pall. After the bier walk a cross-bearer and acolytes, one of whom carries a vase of holy water, and last a priest in cap and cape. Slowly and reverently they advance towards the graveyard, some five hundred feet distant, singing as they go, till they are out of sight and hearing. The frail form in its final resting place, the mourners return in groups, and, as the Angelus bell rings, I am struck by the suddenness with which they cease conversation, assume devotional postures, and retain them, statue like, till the prayer is ended."

O'Connor, "Flathead Indians," p. 97.

A similar picture is offered by A[rthur] Sullivan, "Good Friday Among the Flatheads," Indian Sentinel, IV (Spring, 1924), 54.

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[2] One of the more frequently recited prayers was the Pater Noster. The Flathead version of the Lord's Prayer in Flathead is as follows:

> "*Kyle-e-ou ltchitchemask askwest kowakshamenshem, ye-elskyloog. Entziezie telletzia spoeoez. Assintails ye-elstoloog etzageel ltchitchemask. Koogwitzelt yettilgwa lokaitsiapetzinem. Kowaeksweemillem klotaiye kloistskwen etzageel kaitskolgwelem klotaye-kloistskwen klielskyloeg koayalokshilem takaekskwentem klotaye kowaeksgweeltem klotaye. Komieetzegail*."

De Smet, *Oregon Missions*, p. 409.

[3] Sunday, however, was announced by raising a flag on a pole, called *Schazze'us* in Salishan. As a result of this particular Sunday ritual, the Lord's Day was henceforth referred to as *Schazze'us*. Palladino, "Historical Notes on the Flathead," p. 9.

[4] It is difficult to determine exactly which Anglican minister Mengarini refers to here. There were, of course, Episcopal chaplains ministering to the needs of their faithful at Fort Vancouver. Others ventured into the Upper Columbia area even before the Iroquois of Caughnawaga, according to Jessett, "Origin of the Term 'Black Robe,'" pp. 50-56.

The order of daily spiritual exercises follows a definite pattern. At sunrise we ring the Angelus Dei; half an hour later the bell is run for Mass.[5] The Flatheads begin with a morning offering recited in their native language, then the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and the Credo; the commandments of God and of the Church, and the four acts of Faith, Hope, Charity, and Contrition. Having finished the prayers, we begin the recitation of the Rosary which is interrupted only briefly shortly before the elevation of the Host and at the Communion, at which time we sing a hymn to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. When the Mass is finished, the missionary instructs (except on Saturday which is reserved for confessions). After this we recite the litany of the Blessed Virgin, then an Our Father, a Hail Mary, and an act of contrition for the conversion of sinners, concluding with a hymn of thanksgiving.

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[5] The Angelus is a short devotion in honor of the Incarnation, repeated three times each day--morning, noon and evening--at the sound of the bell. Originally, it was associated with Compline, theoretically recited at sundown, though in practice following closely upon the afternoon office of Vespers. The ritual consists essentially in the triple repetition of the Hail Mary, to which in later times have been added three introductory versicles and a concluding versicle and prayer. From the first word of the three versicles, i.e., Angelus Domini nuntiavit Mariae (The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary), the devotion derives its name. The Catholic Encyclopedia, I, 486.

During the course of the morning, the missionary visits the sick, giving the medicines according to their needs. Half an hour before noon the bells are again rung for the Angelus. Two hours later it is time for the children's catechism instruction which is opened with singing of the Ave Maria and followed by the recitation of the lesson, the questioning and the simplest of explanations. We conclude with a little hymn. One hour before sunset the bells are rung for a second recitation of the prayers offered in the morning.

On Saturdays the bells are rung for confession which is offered on a rotating basis.[6] In other words, the first week the men confess, the second week the women, the third the young people, the fourth the children. As a result each one goes to confession at least once a month. Without this division all would go to confession each week, and even every day if he were allowed. This the missionary cannot permit since it is impossible to hear four hundred confessions each week or each day.[7]

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[6] Others were to comment upon the same burdensome fervor. One visitor wrote of the Flatheads:

> "They were especially fond of going to confession, and some of them, if allowed, would do so more than once a day. A Father told me that when with them on the buffalo hunt he had more than once been approached in the middle of the night by a scrupulous Indian who, taking him by the toes, would waken him and ask him to hear his confession. This, I submit, is a little more than many more favored believers of the white race are accustomed to do."

O'Connor, "The Flathead Indians," p. 96.

On Sunday, Mass is sung and instructions are given after the Gospel. An act of contrition is recited after the Sanctus, and after singing a hymn during the elevation, the congregation recites a passage from the Capi[8] [Acts of the Apostles], followed by the recitation of two other acts in preparation for Holy Communion. The same is done after the Agnus Dei. Once the Communion is finished they recite two acts of thanksgiving. This they repeat after the Last Gospel. After Mass we conduct the ferial day rituals.[9]

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[7] Examples of the penances given to the Indians found among the papers of Father Joseph Joset are undoubtedly representative. "Patrick--every day one pair of beads as long as he lives; Isabelle--one pair of beads every Saturday for one year and avoid anger; Mary Frances--two pairs of beads every day and every Saturday keep her tongue." "'Penance List for Indians,'" p. 1, Joset Papers, Box I, Jesuit Archives, Gonzaga University.

[8] Mengarini's colloqualism is somewhat confusing. This could be a reference to readings from the writings of the Fathers of the Church. On the other hand, it could mean a selected reading from the "Acts of Apostles."

[9] Feria, the Latin word for "free day," denoted a day upon which the people, especially the slaves, were not obliged to work, and on which there were no court sessions. Today the term feria is used to denote days of the week with the exception of Sunday and Saturday. Various reasons are given for this terminology. The Roman Breviary in the

That is, after the first Mass, since there is yet another one for those who have remained on guard in their tents.

All return to church to recite the Rosary when the bells are rung about an hour before noon. Two hours after noon the general catechism class is convened, after which evening prayers are offered and the litanies are sung. Together we recite the Memorare along with the Hail Mary for the conversion of sinners, then we offer benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. After evening devotions, when time and circumstance permit, we allow the youngsters to compete in games on the green. The victors are given some small rewards.

The patron's day for the village is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary.[10] On this day as on Christ-

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sixth lesson for December 31 says that Pope Sylvester ordered the continuance of the already existing custom, "that the clergy daily abstaining from earthly cares would be free to serve God alone." Others believe that the Church simply Christianized a Jewish practice. The Jews frequently counted the days from the Sabbath, and so we find in the Gospels such expressions as una Sabbati and prima Sabbati, the first from the Sabbath. The early Christians reckoned the days after Easter in this fashion, but, since all the days of Easter week were holy days, they called Easter Monday, not the first day after Easter, but the second feria or feast day; and since every Sunday in the dies Dominica, a lesser Easter day, the custom prevailed to call each Monday a feria secunda, and so on for the rest of the week. The Catholic Encyclopedia, VI, 43.

[10] The feast, observed on December 8, is based upon the 1854 doctrine summarized by Pope Pius IX, promulgating the dogma that the Blessed Virgin Mary "in the first instant of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace granted by God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the

mas and Easter, a shot is fired after each toll of the bell. Before Mass we distribute blessed bread to everyone, and during evening catechism those who have performed most diligently are rewarded. In all of the other ecclesiastical ceremonies the rites of the Church are strictly observed.

In conclusion, it would not be inappropriate to say a little something more about the physical appearance of the mission. Until now the missionaries have lived in a temporary house and church in some animal skin tents belonging to the Flatheads. But we have begun to build a finer, more spacious church, a house for the missionaries, and a permanent village for the savages.[11] Since enemy

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Saviour of the human race, was preserved exempt from all stain of original sin."

From the time of Duns Scotus (d. 1308) not only did the doctrine become the common opinion at the universities, but the feast spread widely to those countries where it had not been previously adopted. With the exception of the Dominicans, all or nearly all of the religious orders took it up. The decree of the first Council of Baltimore (1846) electing Mary in her Immaculate Conception principal patron of the United States was confirmed on February 7, 1847. The Catholic Encyclopedia, VII, 674-681.

[11] In 1846 St. Mary's mission was the same temporary structure built of cottonwood logs when the missionaries first arrived. The only addition had been twenty-two wooden props added to keep the structure standing. At the time of Mengarini's writing a new structure was under construction. Around it now stood twelve log houses, a saw mill, a grist mill, farm buildings, and all of this was surrounded by the unflinching confidence in a dream. Palladino, "Historical Notes," p. 13.

harassment does not allow the construction of homes in separate locations, the village is being built in the quadrangular shape of a fortress. Each house is fifty feet away from the next. Each is about twenty square feet in size and twelve feet high. Around it is a lawn of sixty square feet. The outside walls of the village are fifteen feet high and are constructed in such a manner that one wall provides major support for the other, as well as a rampart in case of attack. All the construction is of crude brick. The parks provide the savages with a place to corral their animals. Every day these greens will be cleaned by each family. Until all the village is maintained as well as possible, a Prefect of Sanitation will be appointed to supervise.

Since the houses which form the quadrangle are not sufficient for all the families, the village is divided into four parts, each of which is under the care of a head whose house is nearer the town's center which is marked by a cross. Since the savages are never as happy as when they are in the forest, poplars will be planted within as well as outside the village in order to provide shade in summertime. On the map which follows, the color black indicates the construction not yet begun, and the color red, the construction which has either been initiated or completed.[12]

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[12] The Salish, as they followed the missionaries into wood and field, heard them speak and watched them till the land, could now say to the Iroquois of Caughnawaga, as did the inhabitants of Samaria: "Now, we do not believe on account of your words, but we have seen with our own eyes, and have heard with our own ears." Hubert A. Post, S.J., "Among the Flathead," The Indian Sentinel, II (Winter, 1920), 50.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

MENGARINI'S ORIGINAL REQUEST FOR A MISSIONARY POST

The following letter written by Mengarini on December 25, 1839, while still a seminarian in Rome, clearly reveals his zealous religious dedication, enhanced as he notes by Bishop Joseph Rosati's description of the Flathead delegation's search for Blackrobes. The text is translated and reproduced from a microcopy of the original manuscript.

Very Reverend Father
Prov. Rome - Rome
Dec. 25, 1839
F. Schol. Gregor. Mengarini

After mature examination and with the approval of my spiritual director I place at the feet of Your Reverence thru the hands of the Reverend Father Provincial this my request, that for the greater glory of God you may deign to answer my supplication. The request I make of Your Reverence is one which grew with my vocation to the Company of Jesus. In other words about fifteen years ago was born in me a vocation to the foreign missions which continued to grow. In as many years there has not been one moment in which I have had contrary inclinations toward one or the other. In fact each day for eleven years I have implored Saint Francis Xavier to aid me in pursuing what one might call this second vocation from God.

Does it surprise you, Your Reverence, that in the past I have not revealed this, my desire, although I was continually drawn to do it, especially when you sent the circular letters in which you urged us to heed the call of the missions. I was held back because of the limited virtue I found in myself, the burden of teaching in which I was involved and the fact that I was not yet ordained. I felt it was not yet the opportune time; therefore I had resigned myself to wait until receiving Holy Orders. This I would have done, had not God, our Master, during the Spiritual Exercises of last October deigned to look with pity upon me, and infuse within me a new spirit, which I deeply cherish and which I hope will only grow stronger with time. Together with many other graces which were unexpected, and undeserved, He placed in my heart such urgings to confess all to Your Reverence, that doing so, I would have countered my conscience.

I am as certain of this desire, as I am of my entry into the Company, therefore, I request the foreign missions of Your Paternity and if you should ask where, I would answer any place, but my heart has been, and always remains there, where the poor souls have no one to help them escape the hands of the devil, and where there is the greatest hope, in fact to give both life and blood for love of Jesus, our Captain.

Let my testimony be the tears of happiness which I shed as I write this, may God in his compassion not render me unworthy because of my sins. When I declared to the spiritual director my resolution to offer myself to Your Reverence, he held me back from doing it for the present, in order to better understand the will of God, and to see in what state of mind I would be in time of desolation. In truth, two days did not pass before God allowed my heart and mind to fill with apprehension of all types of dangers, of hardships the likes of which are encountered in such a ministry, that simply to think of them forced me to tremble, the demon who saw the opportune moment did not remain inert and attempted with a thousand suggestions as much as he could to dissuade me from manifesting this to Your Reverence. If I were to tell you how much illumination I received from God in that time of double temptation I would be forced to go on at length. I will say only that withal, it did not serve but to make me better understand that this was a true vocation from God, and that I would emerge from this more strong and more resolute than before. This, in fact, is what the spiritual director specifically advised me to manifest to Your Reverence. Therefore, as far as hardships and dangers of all sorts, none can be more serious than those that with the help of God I feel I have already been able to conquer.

My Father, I say no more of this. Regarding the particular qualities which Your Reverence outlined in the requirements for the missions in 1833, I could assure verbally or in writing of my competence. Let it be as Your Reverence prefers. In the meantime, permit me upon the conclusion of my supplication to again beseech and implore Your Reverence in the name of the passion and death of our Divine Captain, Jesus Christ, and of His most precious blood which He shed for many poor souls who are irreparably lost because they have no one to guide them; that you grant me this favor, and do not close that door that our servant the Apostle St. Francis Xavier opened at such a dear price for those, especially of this Company. If Your Reverence believes that I am still too unworthy, at least, My Father, pray, pray to our Father and St. Francis Xavier that they will render me worthy. My Father, my Father, a single word of reply, one _fiat_, or at least one line alone which I receive from Your Reverence in which you give me some hope. It will be for me like a fire which will serve to light in me the worthy desire which God our Master deigned to communicate to me, as it were to give myself to Him, and to venture always more on the path of sanctity. With your paternal blessing I remain a faithful servant of Your Paternity.

[Signed] Gregory Mengarini

Rome

On the day of the holiest Christmas, 1839

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

A CHRONOLOGY OF WHITE CONTACT WITH THE FLATHEAD TO 1850

1740-43 Father Claude Godfrey Coquart, S.J., a member of the expedition of Sieur de la Verendyre, may have been among the first whites to meet the Flatheads. An official report of the group's exploration of the southwest corner of Montana explicitly mentions meeting them. Palladino, "Historical Notes," p. 7; "Few White Men to State Before Jesuit Fathers," The Sunday Missoulian (Missoula, Montana), August 24, 1841. Mallet also noted this initial contact, but is the only one to place it as late as 1783. Mallet, "Origin of Flathead Mission," p. 175.

1801-03 Jervis Cutler described a trip through the Upper Missouri fur country. His Journal includes sketches of a man and a woman of the Flathead nation (London, 1812), pp. 21-23.

1804-06 Francoise Antoine Larocque, a prominent agent of the Northwest Fur Company, wrote: "The Flatheads inhabit the western side of the Rocky Mountains at the heads of the rivers that have a southwesterly course and flow into the ocean . . . They came every fall to the Fort of the Missouri or thereabouts to kill buffaloes." Francoise Larocque, Journal from the Assiniboine to the Yellowstone, I, 87.

1805 Private Joseph Whitehouse described his first meeting with the Flatheads: " . . . they are the likelyest and honest Savages we have ever yet Seen." Thwaites, Early Western Travels, VII, pt. 1, 149-50.

1805 On Wednesday, September 4, 1805, Lewis and Clark met a party of the Tushepau (Flathead) nation consisting of about thirty-three lodges, " . . . 80 men 400 Total and at least 500 horses." DeVoto, Journals of Lewis and Clark, p. 233.

1806 An entry in the diary of Patrick Gass on March 21, 1806, noted: "To the honour of the Flatheads . . . we must mention them as an exception; as they do not exhibit those loose feelings of carnal desire, nor appear addicted to the common customs of prostitutions." Patrick Gass, Gass's Journal of the Lewis and Clark Expedition (Chicago, 1904), p. 204.

1808 A log trading house was built by Finan McDonald on the Kootenai River near what today is known as Libby, Montana. Washington Irving, Astoria, ed. by Edgeley F. Todd (Norman, 1964), p. 95, note 1.

1809 David Thompson first built Kullyspell House near modern Hope, Montana. Later that year he began constructing Salish or Saleesh House which was built on the Clark Fork, two miles below Thompson Prairie. It was from this latter post that the Flatheads secured their first guns. David Thompson, "Diary, September 8-October 11, 1809," ed. by Thompson C. Elliott, Pacific Northwest Quarterly, XI (April, 1920), 97-103; M. Catherine White, "Saleesh House, the First Trading Post Among the Flathead," Pacific Northwest Quarterly, XXXIII (September, 1942), 251-63.

1811 Alexander Henry praised the Flathead, saying: "They never attempt war themselves, and have the character of brave and virtuous people, not in the least addicted to those vices so common among savages who have had long intercourse with Europeans." Elliot Coues, ed., New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest, 3 vols. (New York, 1897), II, 710.

1811-12 Ross Cox commented upon the popularity of Finan McDonald among the Flathead in 1811, noting that he even joined in their battles. John A. Meyers, "Finan McDonald--Explorer, Fur Trader and Legislator," Washington Historical Society Quarterly, XIII (July, 1922), p. 197. The following year, he himself wintered among the Flatheads as he traded furs with them for the Northwest Fur Company. "Shivering Good Rheumatism Cure," The Sunday Missoulian (Missoula, Montana), August 24, 1941.

1823 Ogden estimates the population of the Flathead as being " . . . in all two hundred lodges, but it was anciently much more numerous . . ." Peter Skene Ogden, Traits of American-Indian Life and Character (London, 1853), p. 23.

1824 On November 29, 1824, Alexander Ross wrote in his journal that "Kootenais joined Flatheads at Prairie de Chevaux. Indians are now as follows there:

Lodges	42
Flatheads, Men and Lads	168
Guns	180
Women	70
Children	68"

Cited in Merriam, Ethnomusicology of the Flathead Indians, p. 347.

1824 As a result of the challenge of the Hudson's Bay Fur Company monopoly, the American fur traders led by Jedediah Smith absorbed a large part of the Flathead and Nez Perce commerce. DeVoto, Across the Wide Missouri, p. 12.

1824 In 1824 John Work, chief trader of the Hudson's Bay Company, ventured into the territory of the Salish and found the natives friendly. In the face of American competition, Work was again sent up the Columbia River in 1826 with three boats loaded with merchandise. Kootenai Post was strengthened and Flathead Post was moved eastward. William S. Lewis and Paul C. Phillips (eds.), The Journal of John Work, a Chief Trader of the Hudson's Bay Company, During his Journey from Vancouver to the Flatheads and the Blackfeet of the Pacific Northwest (Cleveland, 1923), pp. 78-84.

1826 James Ohio Pattie wrote that he had met the Flathead Indians, on June 3, 1826. But the inaccuracy of his description in which he stresses their deformity makes the report suspect.

Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XVIII, p. 141.

1829 The Presidential message presented by Andrew Jackson in 1831 contains Joshua Pilcher's account of wintering with the Flatheads in 1829. Henry R. Wagner, revised by Charles L. Camp, The Plains and the Rockies, 3rd ed. (Columbus, Ohio, 1953), p. 44.

1830 At the July 8, 1830, Rendezvous at Pierre's Hole, Captain Benjamin L. Bonneville recorded that there were about eighty lodges of Flatheads. He further observed that the Flatheads took pride in their number of horses. Some who encamped around him had from thirty to forty each. Washington Irving, The Adventures of Captain Bonneville, U.S.A., ed. by Edgely F. Todd (Norman, Oklahoma, 1964), p. 98.

1831 Ferris observed that the Flatheads were the only tribe of the Rocky Mountains that could with truth boast of the fact that they had never killed or robbed a white man. Ferris, Life in Rockies, p. 73.

1832 Nathaniel Wyeth, who traded frequently with the Flatheads, praised them as brave and sincere. They do not steal or rob unless driven to it by starvation. Philip Henry Overmeyer, "Nathaniel Jarvis Wyeth," Pacific Northwest Quarterly, XXIV (January, 1933), 28-48.

1835 The Reverend Samuel Parker estimated the number of Flatheads as being about eight hundred persons. He added that he was disappointed to see nothing peculiar in the Flathead Indians which would justify their name. Parker, Journal, p. 80.

1841 Father Pierre Jean De Smet observed that unlike many other Indians, the Flatheads are disinterested, generous, devoted, and irreproachable regarding probity and morality. Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XXIX, p. 287.

1845 Captain Henry J. Warre sketched the source of the Columbia River, and had thus reached Flathead country. Sketches in North America and the Oregon Territory (London, 1848).

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

AN ANALYSIS OF THE VARIANTS IN GEORGE GIBBS' ACCOUNT OF FLATHEAD COSMOLOGY

In his account of Indian mythology George Gibbs noted that the description of Flathead cosmology, included in the following excerpt from Gibbs' memoirs, was gleaned from a letter sent to him by Father Gabriel [sic] Mengarini, S.J. Although it parallels Mengarini's account in the Memorie, errors, particularly in the transcription of proper names, are evident, and corrections have been provided.

Variant Account[1]

The earth, according to them [the Flatheads], is not spherical, but flat and surrounded with water on all sides, like an island in the midst of a lake; and heaven or sky is nothing else than a huge hollow mountain, covering the earth, as the covering of a kettle.[2] Before the creation of this Skomeltem[3] (an obsolete word meaning mother, and which has been superseded by the word skpi[4]), a very powerful woman who too existed by herself, begot a son without cooperation of man, and the son undertook to create heaven and earth and men, and for his dwelling he chose the summit of the covering, viz.: heaven, whence he took the name of Amotkan[5] which means "he who sits on the top of the mountain." Skomeltem, his mother, afterwards remained alone on another land beyond the waters; for besides one globe they thought that Amotkan created other globes under, above and around us.

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[1] This account of Flathead cosmology was sent to Gibbs by Mengarini as has been noted. It was included in an official government report prepared by Gibbs for Isaac I. Stevens while the latter was Superintendent of Indian Affairs of the Washington Territory. Portions of Gibbs' report (pp. 3-114 and pp. 223-50) were published later as part of the United States Geographical and Geological Survey of the Rocky Mountains, pp. 157-240.

Selections from this Gibbs manuscript have been edited by Clark, "Gibbs' Account of Indian Mythology in the Oregon and Washington Territories," pp. 293-325; 125-69 (full citation in bibliography).

The original Gibbs manuscript is now the property of the Wisconsin State Historical Society. It is with their permission that the section identified as Mengarini's account has been reproduced.

This Amotkan was then considered as this invisible God who has also many sons though having no wife, and when for the first time the Indians saw the whites, they considered them the actual sons of Amotkan, and consequently immortal until one of them was killed by the Blackfeet.

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[2] A parallel account written by Mengarini some forty years before comprises Chapter II of the "Memorie."

[3] In Mengarini's original 1848 manuscript the word clearly appears as "Skomelten." Mt. Sax., Vol. 1, Fol. VII, p. 3, GASJ.

[4] The word is clearly written as "skói" in the original. Ibid., p. 2.

[5] Mengarini consistently accents the name of "Amòtkan." Ibid., p. 2.

The first generation of mankind became very wicked and turned a deaf ear to the admonitions of Amotkan, who in his wrath drowned them all in a general inundation. Amotkan undertook a second creation of a set of people twice as tall as the first ones, but proving worse they were all destroyed by fire from heaven. The third generation being as bad as the rest was destroyed through a general pestilence. The fourth would also have been annihilated on account of its crimes, had not Mother Skomeltem interceded with her son on behalf of mankind. The wrath of Amotkan was appeased at the prayers of his mother and he promised never to destroy his creations any more.

But until this time the world was in perfect darkness, there being no sun and the people being persuaded that the only cause of their wickedness was their darkness, they held a general council for the purpose of enlightening the world, but as everyone refused, Sinchlep[6] (the small prairie wolf), being the smartest of all the animals, undertook and succeeded in doing so a very little less than the actual sun, and the people were very glad; but the animals of the time had the power of speaking and Sinchlep being very cunning interfered too much in the secret business of the people and in passing by during the day, published the actions which the people performed in secret, wherefore the people in anger took Sinchlep by the tail which in that time was very long, brought him to the ground, and prevented his being the sun any more. The crow then offered himself to take the place of Sinchlep but being naturally so very black, gave very little light and unable to endure the ridicule of the people, he retired with shame. Finally, Amotkan sent out one of his sons called Spokani to enlighten the world.[7] But before doing so, Spokani wished to marry with a woman of the earth. In coming down from heaven he landed just in the camp of the Flatheads;[8] but the people seeing him, though very handsome, so very different from themselves, refused him admittance to their lodges. Spokani, very much displeased, left the place, and seeing near the place a small cottage inhabited by a family of frogs, he went in, complained of the people and showed his desire to marry one of the frogs.

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[6] In the original manuscript Mengarini has clearly written "Sincelep." Ibid., p. 3.

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[7] According to the original account the word correctly written would be "Spakani." Ibid.

[8] In the original manuscript of the "Memorie" Mengarini described this as a visit to the Upper Pend d'Oreilles. The variation may be explained in light of the fact that the Pend d'Oreilles along with the Kalispels and others, belong to the Salishan language group. Nevertheless, they strenuously object to being considered part of the Flathead tribe. Turney-High, Flathead Indians of Montana, p. 5.

There was one, very large and fat, and she thought herself very happy to become the wife of Amotkan [sic] and with one jump she became one flesh, or incarnated with the cheek of Spokani, and matrimony was then celebrated and consummated. The people on seeing the cheek of Spokani so disfigured, and enraged at the presumption of mistress frog, tried with sticks to kill her, until very much ashamed, she prayed her husband to leave the earth, and since he had come to make himself the Sun, to go up immediately, which he did; but to revenge himself the contempt of the people, he does not allow them to see him clearly during the day, when he covers himself with a shining robe, crosses the waters under the earth and then only shows himself as he is with his wife Frog on his cheek.

Thus with these Indians the sun and the moon are the same thing, and this notion accounts for their having but one and the same name for both, viz.: the word Spokani, and so also the spots on the moon are nothing more than a frog. Having heard this story, I inquired of them (there were several chiefs among those present) whether they really believed the fable and they answered that they did, not knowing better. Then I asked them what they thought when they saw the sun and the moon at the same time during the day. They were all startled, looked at one another in surprise, then as reaching for the sun and moon, joined in a general laugh, and covered their faces as ashamed, and one of them looking at me with only one eye, across his fingers, said, "Well, we were all beasts, and sure enough not one of us has ever observed and remarked what you say now." Since that time it was agreed to call the moon by the name of Spokani Skukuez meaning moon of the night.[9]

As to the immortality of the soul, the end of the world, the recompense or punishment after death, they have the tradition that man in dying, dies only half, viz.: the body; the other half (which anciently they did not know how to call, but afterwards their ancestors called Singapens) does not die;[10] but the Singapens of the good ones goes to stay with Amotkan though not knowing to what particular bliss, and the Singapens of the wicked goes to another place, not determined, having no other punishment than to be deprived of the company of Amotkan. For wicked they intended liars and thieves, for lying and theft were among the Flatheads the two, if not exclusive, at least the greatest sins. Moreover they said that the earth and the people have one day to come to an end, and that after this last day, all the dead shall come to life again, and shall be placed on another land, better than the present, and that after such epoch the people shall die no more.

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[9] Mengarini does not include these two final sentences in the original account. Ibid., p. 4.

[10] Although Father Giorda gives yet another spelling in his Dictionary of the Flathead and Kalispel Language, Mengarini clearly writes in his manuscript, "Singappeus." Ibid., p. 4.

Notwithstanding the power and nobility of Amotkan and Skomeltem, they are not the deities the Flatheads worshipped, but Spokani, the sun. After him came as geniuses animals of every kind, the beaver, the crow, the deer, etc., etc.; but Sinchlep, the prairie wolf, was regarded as the most powerful and favorable to mankind. To show the power and favor of Sinchlep, their ancestors reported that there was a time when a large proportion of the earth was inhabited by a set of giants, terrible men, who killed everyone they met with, for which they were called Natliskeliguten which in the ancient language means killers of men; that Sinchlep in pity for the smaller people, went through all the earth, killed every giant and converted them all into stones; and even of late, when the Flatheads in crossing the mountains saw a basaltic rock standing upright on the top, they said to one another, "Keep aside, there is Natliskeliguten, killed by Sinchlep," and every large piece of Silex they saw around was to them the fragment of an arrow of the killers of men. As it happens oftentimes that one or more of those prairie wolves come at night to howl near the village there are still many particularly old women, who believe that Sinchlep in howling foretells them the arrival, by the next day of somebody, friend or foe, provided he howls only three times.

The worship which our Indians rendered to the sun consisted in raising up toewards it a morsel of meat or roots, before eating them, and saying, "Sun, have pity on us, so that animals and fruits may grow in abundance." In their particular distresses and desires, each one prayed to whatever his eyes met with, be it a tree or a stone. In worshipping the sun our Indians were not so fervent as the Blackfeet are even now, who not satisfied with offering a parcel [sic] of their food, very often cut off large pieces of their flesh and offer them to their Natosa[11] (the Sun) particularly when they go to war. I have asked an old man well nigh a hundred years of age, if he prayed when he was young, and what did he pray. "Oh yes," he answered. "Every morning my mother brought me into the woods, and having found a dead pine tree, broken and rotten from old age, she told me, 'Now, my son, scratch yourself well to that tree, and pray,' and so I did, saying 'Oh my good tree, have pity on me and let me live as long as you lived; and I repeated always the same prayers. My mother did the same at another tree not far from mine, until our sore shoulders compelled us to put an end to our prayers."

Generally the prayers of our Indians consisted in asking to live a long time, to kill plenty of animals and enemies, and to steal the greatest number of horses possible, and this was the only instance when to steal not only was not a fault but a great merit and bravery, since no man could ever hope to become a great chief unless he had killed at least seven Blackfeet and stolen twelve horses. As it happens rather often that both people and animals are killed by thunder, so they regarded it as an evil genius, and the rainbow was for them nothing else than the same thunderbolt looking down for prey amongst the people, and the Indians believed that the only means to avoid being killed, was to make off immediately and go to encamp at some miles distant.

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[11] In the original manuscript Mengarini spells the name "Natala." Hodge, however, provides several other spellings for the sun god of the Blackfoot. Hodge, Handbook of American Indians, II, p. 571.

The remainder that may be said about the Flatheads, is so very common with other tribes of Indians that I think it quite useless to repeat here what you have already acquired elsewhere.

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D

MENGARINI'S OFFICIAL REPORT FOR 1847 CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THE LITTLE FARO REBELLION

The village rebellion led by the Flathead brave, Little Faro, was an echo of the Indian protest against whites in the Oregon Territory which flared intermittently throughout the region during 1847. In his official annual report to the Father General of the Society of Jesus, Mengarini details the events, the inability of the chiefs to quell them and the eventual reunion of the factions. Mt. Sax., Vol. 1, Fol. V, p. 6, GASJ.

St. Mary's Mission
February 21, 1848

Father Gregory Mengarini to Father General

Paternity

Along with this letter is included for Your Paternity, the letter which I started to dispatch in September of last year, but which Father Joset was unable to mail for he received it in November after the mails had left. This overdue letter carries with it the pain you would have felt had you been able to witness the trials of St. Mary's Mission. It was but temporary as you will see from my second letter in which I shall explain the events and describe how I with the aid of Our Father Facit nobilissi misericordia suam, which was, however, preceded by great tribulation.

The Flatheads who returned from the buffalo hunt somewhat after my return from the Couer d'Alene, appeared somewhat more well-disposed. At the same time, the whites, not content with having usurped the lands of the savages, reintroduced the game of the hands, teaching it to the younger Flatheads who they cunningly succeeded in luring to the other side of the river. Two brothers then declared they were no longer Frenchmen but Americans and in lowered voices began to criticize their religion and the [illegible].

The youths then began to play in the village itself, near our house. Several of the chiefs murmured against the resumption of this vice, but they made little impression, and thus were satisfied simply to say, "Tsalgatt, it is not good."

All these things were reported to me, and foreseeing that things would get worse if the chiefs continued to behave as they did, I began instructing them in particular and exhorting them strongly to do their duty so that calm would reign over the community and it would not be seduced. But one approach or another accomplished nothing. Finally, when all the leaders as well as the subjects developed an antagonism toward the whites, and toward one of the Flatheads who had become good friends with them, even they wished the father to cast them out. Now, this friend of the whites who until now [illegible] old things [illegible]. I will only say that this herald who announced the end of penance and declared himself leader, caused great injury to the missionary effort and for sometime greatly upset the relationship between missionary and savage.

He, I now believe, took offense at a correction that the missionary thought he had given with the best intention. On Sunday when all the savages gathered in church to recite the rosary, he interfered and began to harangue them publicly in the church, uttering the most insulting things against the missionaries, yet in such a manner that I understood nearly nothing. From that he went on to inveigh against and complain against the chiefs. And not one (with the exception of our interpreter Francis) shouted out any disapproval of this diatribe. No one attempted to still this tirade except this one poor blind man, nor did they demonstrate the slightest sign of disapproval.

When from several villagers I learned the extent of the scandal given and the negative attitude of the chiefs, I decided that it was necessary to give a little lesson to all, so as much to reveal to the scandalizer the great harm done, as to give to the others a lesson regarding the profanation of the house of God, I decided during the night that the church would remain closed and we would not give benediction, thinking that thus I would finally shock them.

During that same day an epidemic of Vaireganle erupted. A young girl died that evening. Again I called the chiefs and openly spoke to them, reminding them that forty others were dying. In other words, the toll appeared to be three times that of other years. Perhaps, I suggested, this was a warning from God to shock them into at least controlling the scandalous talk in church, even if they wished to do nothing more. If they did this, tomorrow we would say Mass. If they did nothing, we would not say Mass, but instead dismiss the people. There was one who went to the scandalizer and pleaded with him not to again enter the church [to interrupt], but the next day no attention was given. The scandalizer not only entered the church with enthusiasm, but placed himself as close as possible to the altar amidst the chiefs, and assumed the air of being on the pulpit. Father Ravalli who was of the same opinion as I took the responsibility of saying Mass in order to prove to the savages that I was not alone in opposing them. Father Ravalli had already vested, the prayers had begun when we saw the scandalizer nearby. Ravalli interrupted the prayers, unvested, and dismissed the people. Then we announced that there would be no more prayer in church until one of the chiefs or someone else would come to the missionary with the assurance that the scandalizer would not again enter or appear.

The scandalizer was greatly praised by the two whites who claimed to be Americans and encouraged by them, he continued his harangue throughout the day, running about the village like a man possessed. He shouted at the missionaries and urged them to leave. Then he turned upon the chiefs calling them puppets (and not without cause).

But who would have thought that instead of a day or two to ventilate their grievances, instead three weeks would pass before there would be relief from this harassment. Frequently, men came running to complain that there was no one to impede this rabble rouser. But all ended with that for the chiefs appeared to be sleeping.

But in the meantime the scandalizer was struck with the disease. The throat, mouth and tongue swelled, yet he continued his attacks each day. And he recovered. But on that same day the youngest of his children who out of affection he had given his own name of Sioux Taren, was attacked by a cancer [?] in the mouth which in three days spread across his face. It was accompanied by such a stench that all were obliged to leave the house. The fourth day he died. But instead of opening his father's eyes, this only served to harden him, and his invective became worse than ever. Finally shouting that the prayers offered in the tent were as dry as buffalo sinew. Then the chiefs withdrew to deliberate. Four of these went to the house of the poor scandalizer imploring him to present himself before the great chief. But they were received with the greeting of puppets, and following this atheist's refusal, they retired one by one. One of the first went to report to the missionary that they some wished to take action while the others did not.

Things were reduced to this extreme state. The missionaries were exhausted of resources. They had offered Masses and Holy Communions, had sought the prayers of the congregation offered to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and had worked for months using all human means to shake the Flatheads, especially since many were dying each day from German measles.

Finally, God moved the heart of one man of advanced age, who suffered to see the extreme weakness of the chiefs. The day following their announced disagreement, he remained in the tent with the chiefs after prayer and in a fine forceful manner requested permission to address the scandalizer himself. Without much ceremony he prepared to act. The scandalizer, now seeing his opportunity at an end, allowed himself to be conducted like a lamb before the chiefs who flogged him and subjected him to a scathing exhortation. In a matter of one day all took on a new aspect.